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PRAYERS IN THE CONGREGATION

By HENRY WARD BEECHER, D.D.

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IN THE CHURCH.

I. ON SUNDAYS.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

Our Father, another day of rest is granted unto us. We accept it ours—the token of Thy love and remembrance. We bring honour to Thee and desire to make mention of Thy name, and to call Thee Father. Thou art our Father, and Thou hast made that name more venerable and more full of love than all our earthly associations of parents have been able to do; for Thou art greater and better and more true to all the duties of love than earthly parents can be. And now enrich us this day by giving us the power more perfectly to approach Thee, and to understand Thee, and to enter into sympathy with Thee. This is our strength, the joy of the Lord. And we beseech Thee that Thou wilt drive intrusive cares and thoughts away. May the world no longer have dominion over us; may we find ourselves easily controlling it, and may it be sweet to draw near to Thee with praise. May we make mention of our sins without fear, since Thou hast washed them away. May we be able to view thee with uplooking face; may we gain strength to-day by the power of Thy love; may everything conduce to shine honour and thy glory in our worship. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

O Thou that dwellest in Heaven: round about Thee are those that are risen indeed—the spirits of the just made perfect, and other ranks, dominions, and powers that are

nameless. Thou art in blessed society. We know not what Thou art in perspection, and can have but faint thoughts of what is divine glory. Yet we believe that, central among all other things, is Thy paternal nature; and that, when we are inspired to say from the heart "OUR FATHER," we have touched the very height of that to which we shall come through ages. We know not what we say—we know not all the meaning of that precious word; we know not what FATHERHOOD means when enveloped in all the majesty of the infinite, and stretched abroad in all its fulness, richness, and tenderness;—when over it is all the grandeur of the eternal spheres.

When we think of that power by which Thou didst cause the material creation, which in its appointed course is the smallest part, and that not there is Thy pride and Thy glory, but that Thy nature, in its reality and grandeur, is in Thine heart—Oh, when we understand that Thou art greater than any outward world can make Thee seem to us, and that Thou art greater in Thy moral nature than in any conception which we can form of the greatness of Thy physical power, our minds are overwhelmed: and yet we are encouraged to come to Thee. Thou dost not sit to thunder us away. Thou dost not sit to be terrible, though Thou art august. Thou dost not sit to burn as an unquenchable fire, though Thou art a consuming fire to Thine enemies.

We rejoice that Thou drawest us toward Thee with sweet permission, with persuasion, with blessed command; that Thou art endeavouring to persuade us by all the processions of nature, by all the daily occurrences of providence, by all the teachings of Thy Word, by all the ministrations of Thy grace, and by all the influences of the Holy Ghost, shed abroad upon our souls.

What we are that Thou shouldst so desire us, what there is in us that Thou couldst look at to love, we do not understand; but Thou seest us not only in what we are, but in what we are to be. Thou beholdest us as we shall be when our education is complete, when Thou shalt present us before the eternal throne, without spot or blemish. We rejoice that Thou dost love us;—that Thy love is omnipotent; and that, by Thy grace, we shall persevere unto the end, and finally be saved.

We thank Thee that we are brought together into church relationships, and have had so much joy in public worship and in all social service of religion. We thank Thee that Thou hast purged from our minds so much of wickedness; that Thou hast removed so many doubts; that Thou hast brought many of us to experience so much of Thy love: and that Thou art bringing others to the same conviction of the sufficiency of Christ for all their sin, so that they are able to sit down under his banner of love with the sweetest composure and rest.

Oh, how blessed shall be that entrance when we that have known each other in the flesh with manifold imperfections; when we that have consorted together in this vale of tears, bearing each other's burdens, shall stand up in everlasting perfection, where we shall bear with each other no longer, but be as the angels of God and equal in light for evermore! Grant that the forethought of this coming glory may sanctify our earthly association.

Oh, carry forward every one of Thy people. Teach them how to live less by fear and by conscience, and more by the nobler impulses of love and trust; how to behold Thee, not as a taskmaster, rigorous and exacting, but a God full of tenderness and of love. May the

way of prayer be easy; may access to Thy throne be short; may we be humbled by our weakness and unworthiness, and while we take everything, may we claim nothing. May we feel that there is no end to Thy bounty; not because we deserve these things, but because of the nature of Thy loving heart. The bounty of Thy heart is so great that Thou dost cause every day to pour itself abroad in endless beneficence; not because of our deserts, but because it is Thine own pleasure.

Brood upon our souls, that we may catch something of Thy nature, and know Thee more and more perfectly. We beseech of Thee that we may not feel that Thou art harsh in Thine administration towards us when Thou sendest burdens. May we believe that they are sent for wise purposes. When Thou sendest afflictions and bereavements, may we understand the way of God towards us. May we never be so puffed up by pride that we shall think ourselves too good to be afflicted; may we never become so much at ease in our prosperity that we shall think it some strange thing when God casts up His highways through our fields. May we never feel that we are so secure in this mortal state as that there is no danger of losing our cherished possessions and treasures. We beseech Thee, O God, that we may feel that all our times and seasons are in Thine hand; that everything which we possess comes from Thee, and is to be resumed at Thy good pleasure; and may we be able to say in all our experiences, "Thy will be done." May we have a submission to Thy will that runs before the coming trouble, so that we may never be broken down, but always live in the light of Thy countenance, our own lifted up to receive its brightness. And we beseech of Thee that Thou wilt be very near to all that are passing through trouble and affliction, that they may not sin nor

grieve Thee by distrust; and grant that they may submit themselves and all their affairs willingly to Thy hand. Guide them out of all their troubles, and exercise them thereby, working in them the peaceful fruits of righteousness which Thou hast declared Thou wilt work by trouble and sorrow.

Grant, we beseech Thee, that we may not grow selfish. May we be delivered from the luxury of religion; may we not seek such experiences and joyful emotions because it may be pleasant. May we feel that we are called to all the experiences that Christ had; that, like our Captain, we are to be made perfect through suffering. May we take cloud or sunshine, storm or calm, sorrow or gladness; be able to bear affliction or prosperity, to be lifted up or to be cast down, to feel that we are as ships that cross the tempestuous deep, for ever swaying and rocking, for ever elevated and lowered by the conflicting waves, but safe through all storms; that the troubles through which we pass are waves, that life is a voyage, and that we are ships making haste to cross the deep. May none of us founder before we reach the harbour, but may every one of us have that pilot in the ship, that guidance, that living Christ, that we shall be sure, through calm and conflict, of reaching the land which He appoints; and may it be Immanuel's land—that place of rest, where no storms are, and where no tears wet the eye.

We thank Thee that so many have reached it. Oh, how many of our friends that have cried upon earth have forgotten long since to weep or cry! How many that on earth faltered in praise, go forth in the grandeur of heavenly joy! How many that lisped by our sides are speaking in the full vocalization of heavenly music! How many that went from us, before they spoke at all,

might well be our teachers now! We thank Thee that heaven is so rich for them. We thank Thee, O Jesus, that Thou art so loved, that Thou art embraced by all the myriads of those that have been redeemed by Thee in every age. Thou art borne up upon the praises of Thy blessed sanctified Church in Heaven. We have those there that are united to us by memory, by love, and by all the ties of earthly relationships. They praise Thee; they rejoice in Thee; they comfort us when we think of them. We would not call them back; we only desire to hold them in such remembrance that we may follow hard after them, and, in the way where they found victory, find our victory too. We call back none to our arms that are gone forth; we call back none to light our dwellings, whose going forth was as the setting sun; we call back no treasures taken to please God, but we only remember that they have gone, and that we shall surely go after them.

Bless these ministrations of Thy providence to our good, and may the things that seem to break us down, lift us up. And as Thou dost give life to the harvest by corrupting the seed, and crushing it under the plough, that it may lose traces of life, to give forth a more abundant increase, so we beseech Thee that when we are cast down and crushed by Thy plough, and seem to be utterly destroyed, may we understand God's way of planting; that out of these afflictions, which for the present are not joyous, but grievous, there shall come forth and there shall grow up peaceable fruits of righteousness. May we, then, every day, every hour, every moment, and in everything, look to Thee to think for us, will for us, and then let us coincide in thinking and in willing with Thee, that we may be God-led, and preserved and saved.

Bless, we beseech Thee, all those for whom we should

pray. Remember all classes and conditions of men. May the Gospel of Christ, that hath dwelt in this world so long without subduing it, receive new power, and may it go forth with more disclosures of divinity than ever; and before the brightness of Thy coming may all forms of selfishness flee away, may all pride be beaten down, may all inhumanities sink to perdition, may the glory of God's love fill and overflow the earth, and may peace, founded upon justice, prevail among the nations of the globe, and war be heard no more for ever, and all the earth see the salvation of our God; and to Thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

REMEMBRANCE OF DIVINE MERCIES.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

We thank Thee, our Father in Heaven, that we have already begun the song of thanksgiving, and we ask that we may have that blessing which is comprehended in Thine own presence; for what the sun is to all the earth in summer, that art Thou to us. Whatever we need, whatever we would have taken away, whatever things must come or must go, all is as it should be in us when Thou art present, quickening, comforting, teaching, guiding. May we have, therefore, in the beginning of our worship to-day, the feeling that we are in the presence of our Father and great benefactor. May we all feel that we have come home to-day. May Thy Word be not the words printed in a book, but the voice of God speaking to us. May all the exercises of worship before Thee, while they are reverential, have that high and blessed familiarity which love gives. May we sing with great gladness, and sing together; may we speak from a true heart, informed by the spirit of God; may we be able together to lift up our prayers, and so wilt Thou move upon us to ask the things which we ought, that, while we are speaking, bessings may fall; and may all the service of the day, being divinely inspired and guided, be divinely blessed. We ask it for Christ Jesus' sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

O God, we come to speak of Thine abundant mercies to us. We wonder while we adore! What are we and

our Father's house, that Thou shouldst have shown such mercies to us? Why was our lot cast in the midst of so much privilege? Why were we so nurtured? Why were angel guards sent to us in the cradle and in all the way of youth upward? O Lord, we rejoice that it is so, and yet we cannot see behind the veil which hides the secret purpose of God in the administration of human affairs. We rejoice that we were born so near to the sanctuary, and, before we knew what it meant, heard its call Sabbath by Sabbath. We thank Thee that our earliest knowledge came through Thy word, full of marvel and wonder. We thank Thee that our earliest thoughts and feelings were those feelings of love to our superiors and parents which taught us how to love upward toward our God. We thank Thee that we were surrounded, yea, woven into the golden fabric of domestic love, and that we were surrounded by so many faithful companions and trusted friends. We thank Thee for the privileges of our childhood, and for all the opportunities of instruction. We thank Thee even for the things which we had of trouble; it was good to bear the yoke in our youth.

We thank Thee that Thou didst show us the way to manhood, and open the door thereat, and didst permit so many of us to walk in thither, and to walk in the way built of God, toward honour, glory, and immortality. How many of us recognize ourselves as thine own, called by Thy Spirit, and called effectually! How many are there that bear witness, because Thou bearest witness in them! How many that remember days of great gladness, of joys from Christ revealed in them the hope of glory! How many, this morning, as they think upon the mercies of God, are overwhelmed with the reflection of His abundant kindnesses! How many have been drawn

out of evil! How many have been healed and brought up from sickness! How many have had those dear to them as their own life spared by Thy kindness!

How many have been rescued from their fears! How many have escaped from temptation, as a bird from the snare of the fowler! How many have seen the things that were cracked and ready to fall, heal again! How many households, that seemed to be threatened with destruction, hast Thou surrounded by the clasping of Thine own arms and held firmly together! Behold, how many there are that stand reading the book of their remembrance, and wondering, as they read, that every line has something of God's goodness! How art Thou celebrated in our thoughts! How is the truth and wisdom of Thy providence made plain, as we go back over all the way in which Thou hast led us in life! Sometimes, when we fall from grace and Thee, and stand looking at our life in the light of our lower feelings, how burdensome and sordid, how unsatisfactory and unfruitful are all things; it is the weary gate that opened to let us into life, and we look wistfully when the day shall come that we shall go out of it. It seems but vanity, vexation, turmoil, and uncertainty, and brooding doubts spread over all the sphere; but when we are caught by Thee, and the spirit lifted up, so that we look upon the world in the light of Thy countenance, and from our higher and nobler nature, how strange and wonderful is the brightness thereof! How our souls thank Thee for that birth into immortality which Thou hast been pleased to give us! Our very tears then seem prayers; our very sorrows and sighs are subjects of thanksgiving; not one stroke has there been too much, not one burden too heavy, not one trial or experience too many. Thy faithfulness seems to us to walk before

and to preside over all the processes and steps of our lives, and we are conscious that we are surrounded by Thee, and that, in the silence with which Thou art pleased to work, we still were thought of and that the silent thoughts of God shot hither and thither all round about; more than stars, more than suns, were they to us, though we scarcely knew their light.

And now, O Lord God, most high and holy, we desire evermore to live as seeing Thee who art invisible; we desire to see every part of our life as Thou beholdest, instinct with meaning, and full of fore-pointings towards immortality; we desire to understand that we are not as brutes are, and that our life is not in our outward things; we desire to feel that our truest life is hid with Christ in God, that we are the first-born of the resurrection, marching all of us homeward and heavenward to honours and dignities, such as are not foreshadowed in anything in this world. We pray that we may be patient; that we may be humble before Thee, but courageous before men and temptation; we pray that we may not repine or murmur under any circumstances. May the bitterness of the cup be welcome to our lips; may all the things of life that seem to strain, and gird, and bind, seem but the forming hand of God; and as the marble knows not why the chisel acts, though the sculptor knows, so, though we do not know what Thou art doing, may we understand that all pressures and pains and troubles are but the hands of God forming us to His own likeness and image; and may we be glad even at the ministry of trouble; may we lift up a joyful heart even when we suffer; and may we learn, at last to come with that blessedness of resignation, whereby we can say, "We rejoice in infirmities, and count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations."

Be pleased to bless all whom we love; we pray that, wherever they may be, they may yet be always with Thee; and if Thy grace and providence are extended above them, why should we follow them with thoughts of fear and anxiety? O Lord, since we can commit ourselves to Thee, why can we not commit all other things which we love? We do; we offer ourselves; we yield up our children; we give our dearest friends and companions, yea, our every hope and anticipation of the future; we leave them in Thy hand. It is a glorious refuge that we have; we plant and place in Thee all things, saying, "Thy will be done."

Bless, we beseech Thee, our brethren of every name. Unite the household of faith more and more, by the adhesion of love, and less and less may they seek to be united by the external forms of belief and government. We beseech Thee that Thou wilt make Thy people love manliness in Christ Jesus, and may this become the highest ideal of Christian life. Thou hast borne Thy churches through the conflicts of time; Thou hast surrounded them with bulwarks; Thou hast given them the sword, the spear, and the shield; and now may they begin to understand that the fig-tree, the vine, the vineyard, and all the pleasant things of the garden, are more desirable than sword or spear or shield. And we beseech of Thee that the things which make for peace, in equity and purity, may more and more rise in value. May Thy people vex each other less and less, distrust less and less, separate themselves less and less. Pour out Thy Spirit upon all those things that are bringing Thy servants of every name together, and grant that this bond of a common love may grow stronger and stronger around the earth. We pray that Thou wilt hasten the day when all evil shall pass away; when slavery shall

cease; when iniquitous laws shall cease; when intemperance, ignorance, and every form of passion shall cease; when the glory of God shall shine, and the Son shall travel in the greatness of His strength; may this blessed day rise not upon us alone, but upon all the nations of the earth. Lord, look again and see those whom Thou hast made; behold the waste and the darkness of the earth; behold the trouble, the ruin, and the dismay of nations. Have mercy upon the earth, O Thou that dost hide Thyself behind Thine own mysterious counsels; shine forth, and bring salvation to all the earth; and to Thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. **Amen.**

PRECIOUSNESS OF THE SANCTUARY.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

We thank Thee, our Father, that we are gathered from so many places by Thy kind providence to this, Thy house of prayer. Thou hast in other times been here to receive us. Stand in Thine own house again to-day, and bid every heart welcome with the assurance of Thy love, of Thy favour, and of Thy presence; and by the power which Thou dost show forth upon us, may we discern the truth hidden in Thy word. May we take hold upon Thee in communion; may we be able to unite together in fellowship of song, and praise Thee with one heart and voice. Grant that all the exercises of the Sabbath, whether in the sanctuary or in our several homes, may conduce to our spiritual comfort and edification; and thus may Thy name be honoured. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

Our Heavenly Father, we do not draw near to Thee in this place as if only here Thou wert to be found. Thou hast made the whole earth to be full of Thee. The heavens declare Thy glory, and the firmament showeth Thy handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech of Thee, through all the years of our lives. Neither is there any place so solitary, nor any so barren, nor any so dark and sad and seemingly neglected, that Thou art

not to be discerned there. Thou hast written of Thee in every part of this domain, and they that are instructed in Thee know how to find Thee everywhere.

But yet in some places we find Thee more easily than in others. Thou hast made this place peculiarly dear to us, because here we have often lingered, waiting for the dawn, until the day-spring came from on high. Here we have come, unable to see by the multitude of our tears, and gone away seeing all the better through them, as if Thou hadst made them lenses. Here we have been pressed down, burdened, and gone leaving our burden, we knew not where. We have come in heavily, and gone out light-hearted indeed. When we turn back our thoughts to the many years that we have been wont to come here,—when we bring to our remembrance those that aforetime have been with us, and are no more upon this side,—how sacred is the place! Though no sprinkling of water, and no reaching out of hands, and no pronunciation of blessing have been here vainly to seek to consecrate these elements, yet ten thousand hearts have consecrated this place. The sprinkling hath been of tears, and the reaching out and imposition of hands hath been indeed in spiritual things.

Here have we not beheld our children bowing to Thee? Have they not stood before us and with us, grouped by faith into the same household? Here have we not had triumph given to us through our sorrow and anguish in their early release, and our loss of them? Here Thou hast made it sweet for us to pray, to sing. Here Thou hast made us seem more lovely to each other than ever we are in our outward and earthly relations. Here Thou hast made the light of heaven to shine golden on the wings of life that aforetime hath been gloomy.

Thou hast here taught us courage, and hope, and faith, and love. Thou hast so stricken us through with these divine elements, that we have been able to carry them with us every week, as we went along our troubled way.

And now when the Sabbath dawns, it comes speaking thoughts of pleasure and rest to us; and when the gates of God's house are thrown open, how do we rejoice to come up together! How sweet and pleasant a house Thou hast made it to us! Though we are in the flesh, and though we are restricted in everything that is good by pride and selfishness, and by the lowmindedness of our habitual thoughts, yet, with all these hindrances, how hast Thou made us to discern things here in the light and glory of heaven! We thank Thee for the memories of the sanctuary, for the experience of the sanctuary, and for all the blessedness which yet is in it or waiting for our reception.

And now we beseech Thee, O Thou that hast power to touch our imagination, our affection, and our understanding, to-day, interpret to us the exceeding greatness of the truths of God. Those least truths around about us, that Thou hast interpreted through forms of matter are more than we can search, and deeper than we can understand; yet these are the underfoot truths, and the least, while above us and related to our spiritual being, what is the grandeur of those immortal truths of love and purity and rectitude which thou art attempting to teach us! Be patient yet, O Thou long-suffering Saviour, as Thou hast been patient in days past with us; for it is through Thy patience that we have hope.

It is not because we are good nor easily made good, —it is not because we are docile or easily instructible,— that we have any hope; for we find ourselves coarse, and dull, and worldly—ungenerous, selfish, and proud; at

times envious and jealous, and filled with all hatefulness of that which, when it comes to us revealed in the light of higher truths, makes us shrink from ourselves with unutterable loathing, and to wonder that Thou couldst look with complacency for a moment upon us.

And yet, such is Thy love, and such is the patience with which it hath inspired Thee, that Thou hast not yet been weary of Thy charge. Thou hast borne us up more tenderly than ever did our parents in our infancy, and Thy thoughts towards us, how precious and how exceeding great the number of them! The wonder of Thy grace, of Thy tenderness, and of Thy kindness, have begun to awaken in us an earnest desire to please Thee. But only when we endeavour to please Thee, do we find how void we are by nature of goodness—only then when we attempt to reach forth our hand to write or to appear growing and vigorous, do we find how rude and untaught our hands are. We stand before Thee undressed; we stand empty; yet with all Thy teaching, there is nothing that we should presume to hold up before Thee and say, "Be gracious unto us by reason of our excellence." Our whole hope and faith is in the greatness, in the grandeur, in the inexhaustibleness of Thy love. In Thyself we must needs find our redemption, our sanctification.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, that Thou wilt cause this glory of Thy nature more and more to rise up before us that we might be shown for evermore, beneficiaries—how we live upon the charity of our God; that we may feel that we receive everything from Thee as a grace, as a gift undeserved; and that, conscious of living upon Thee, we may learn to lean towards our fellow-men, and in our small measure endeavour to reflect upon them from ourselves the same charity; that we may bear with them patiently; that we may be more gentle to all: that we

may have love in our heart that shall be able to overflow and hide as the tide hides the rocks and all noisome things beneath its abundant depths; so may we have that charity that shall cover a multitude of sins and hide them, though it may not destroy them. And we beseech of Thee, having the same experience of Thy nature in love, that we may have the evidence that we are Thy children and are born again, in the presence, activity, and increasing power of love in us. And we pray that Thou wilt teach us more and more the knowledge of ourselves, more and more the skill to extend this divine glory; more and more may we carry in our personal disposition, in our household, and through every part of our worldly business this nobler spirit of the divine nature; so may we live as perpetually to preach; so may we live that men shall be curious to know from what source we draw the inspiration of our life, and thus seeing our good works be led to glorify our Father which is in heaven.

Wilt Thou grant to every one in Thy presence the blessings which they need. Have none come in hither unconscious of their duty, unconscious of their need? Have none come drawn merely by curiosity? If there be any such, O Lord, we pray that Thou wilt be better to them than they meant to be to themselves, and meet them with such divine influence, such an opening of their eyes, such a quickening of their affections, that they shall feel that indeed God hath led them hither for a purpose which they suspected not, and led them in a way they knew not of. Are there those that have been conscious of unsupplied want? Are there any that have been as birds flying prematurely into a land in which no seed nor flower hath yet come up, waiting for the summer to come, and know not what they suffer from hunger? Are there not some that Thou hast brought,

who sit hungering on the tree and longing for food, and know not where to turn? Oh, Thou art the God for such. In their helplessness, in their ignorance, in their want of knowledge of themselves, they shall find in Thee supremest joy, for Thou dost love to do great things for such, because Thou art great in all the inflections of generosity and goodness. If there be such here to-day, may they hear the voice of God in these very musings and wants of their nature, and may they be drawn to Thee for their supply. And if there are any in Thy presence that stand doubtful, whose sun is risen but whose heavens are clouded, oh, grant that the light may no longer shine twilight through the cloud, but break away and give a clear, effulgent experience.

And we beseech Thee that Thou wilt accept, this morning, the heartfelt thanks of those who have seen the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in His beams, who dwell in the summer of His love and are satisfied, whose days go past in music, and all of whose sounds are harmonies of God. May they not fall from this blessed state, nor deem it a trance, but may they abide in it and find the fulness of Thy love, and its sweet fruition, which they may have, who have put their whole trust in Christ Jesus.

Bless all that are young; help those that are appointed as parents, or guardians, or teachers, to so rear them that they may walk from the freshness and purity of youth, untempted, up to the experience of Christian purity and love, without swerving, without contamination. Succour those, we beseech Thee, that are discouraged in the rearing of Thy children, and may they have hope and trust in God, and not be discouraged in themselves.

And now we ask of Thee that we may all have more

and more of the knowledge of God; may we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, until we are changed from glory to glory, and are permitted to take our place by Thy side in heaven, where we will praise Thee for ever and ever. Amen.

OPENING OF THE SPRING.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

Out of Thine infinite fulness, O Lord our God, be pleased to give forth strength and wisdom and inspiration. Breathe upon us, that everything which is good may be lifted up, and that everything which is evil may be laid low, and that we may please Thee. Drawn hither, we trust, by Thy secret and divine drawing, we have come expectant. Release us now from care; cause the peace to rest on us which Thou wert accustomed to breathe on the discipled band on the first day, and may we rejoice together in emancipation; and may the hours to-day surround us better than the walls did Jerusalem, or the mountains the walls. May the Lord our God to-day be our joy, and may His joy be our strength. Bless Thy word; and as Thou didst out of the rock bring forth Christ, our Lord and Saviour, so may the buried Christ be brought forth from the letter to-day, and stand living and blessed before our gaze. Bless us as we may speak the word of truth in exhortation of life and duty; may we be divinely guided in all wisdom, and let it not be a vain thing that we listen, but rather for our souls' everlasting profit. Accept our thanks that we are permitted in voice to take hold of each other's hearts in singing together; may we unite gladly in the sweet fellowship of love one with another; may we unite, by the consciousness of faith, with those that never cease to praise, with every joy of their hearts in divine and everlasting overflow, the grace of God which brought them safe to heaven. Be Thou pleased with our imperfect song and worship. Help us to commune with Thee face to face in prayer unabashed,

coming boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and help in time of need. O Lord, may the whole day, when it shall have passed, seem to have been but an alabaster box of precious ointment broken on our heads, whose perfume shall linger long through the week with us from day to day, until we are taken home to our rest in heaven, where we will praise Thee for evermore. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

We rejoice, our Father, that Thou hast made known to us, in Thy word, that wisdom by which we can interpret all Thy revelation and nature. We have walked aforetime in the midst of the things which Thou hast made, as men walk in desolate cities who cannot read their inscriptions. Now, since Thou hast revealed Thyself to us in Jesus Christ, we behold Thine eternal power and Godhead in nature also. We can perceive Thy unity, Thy wisdom, Thy grace of kindness, and all the sense of things fit and beautiful in Thee, in harmony and fellowship. The sun is no longer without a voice to us. "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." On every side we behold the work of Thy hand and Thy thought expressed in visible things, and are surrounded by God.

To-day we behold Thee. Thou art causing with silent steps the advance of spring, and we behold already in the winter the preparations for its departure. Already we realize what is coming, and rejoice in the advance of warmth and of re-entering life, and in all the offspring of things that shall reach out their arms to bless Thee. Now, O Lord, be pleased to encourage us by these symptoms, that we may think that so Thy word advances to our souls with light from afar, and with warmth streaming daily warmer with all the vivific influences, which, falling divinely upon our thoughts, fill us and cause

them to spring up, the root to grow, and the stem, and every part thereof. For though there is power in us, it is power divinely developed, and the higher we aspire the more we need this divine help. In the things which are lowest to us, in the things in which we attach and adhere to matter and the world, Thou hast given us great power in and of ourselves; and as we rise towards our higher spiritual nature, Thou hast blessedly made us more and more dependent upon Thee; and so Thou hast made it that we shall come nearer to God as we grow strong in ourselves. Thou hast directed it that we should be less and less self-dependent and self-sustained, and more and more enriched by a sovereign and blessed dependence upon Thee.

And this is our joy, that whatever gift we receive blesses not alone in the thing that it is itself, but in the word which it brings of remembrances from Thee. And as the flowers of the earth that are fair, are fairer when love sends them to us,—and as the fruits of the field are good, but better and perfumed with a rarer flavour when they are instances and significant symbols of another's thought,—so all the gifts that we work out ourselves, the things which we pluck from the boughs of life by our own industries, if we see them also as the gifts of God, become doubly valuable. Yet at times all those things seem to us only in their lower uses; but they are sovereign and unspeakably precious because they are a part of the thoughts of God towards us.

It is our joy that we live in Thee. It is this connection of ours with Thee that every year makes us more and more upright and immovable as the sons of God. We are glad that we do not float hither and thither like barren waifs; we are glad that we do not stand only by the adhesion of our natural powers to this world; we

are glad that we have a life in God, and that we are collectively the very body of Christ, of which he is the head.

Now, O Lord, wilt Thou teach us more and more by an inward experience what are these truths of fellowship and unity with Thee; more and more may we sit down beneath Thy care with the sweetest delight. We are weak, but Thou art strong, that the weak may be made strong; we are blind or very short-sighted, Thou art penetrating and omniscient, seeing the end from the beginning, and Thou givest wisdom liberally to those that ask, and upbraidest not. Thou art never mocking us; Thou never givest a gift with a reproach; Thou never pardonest with any word of Thy thought about our transgressions. Thou only art tender and full of delicacy of feeling; Thou only forgettest, and yet Thou art the unforgetting One, and nothing can be hid from thy thought, nor from Thy memory, which is the universal book, where all being writes itself. But our sins are forgotten; they sink as stones at the bottom of the sea; Thou makest mention of them no more for ever; and all the grace which we abuse to-day rises up with a sweet and pleasant fruit to meet our return to-morrow. Would God that His goodness might lead us to repentance, and that, if we are not afraid to sin, we might be at least ashamed to sin.

May we remember out of what a bosom we draw such patience. Thou that holdest Thyself in everlasting purity, art not indolent nor secure in Thine own enjoyment; Thou that art continually active and moving through all creation, exercising Thy whole power and vast being and benefaction; may we see against whom it is that we thus sin,—so selfish, so narrow, so limited and plied with vain and contesting passions. In all our

folly, passion, and vanity, in all our sordid selfishness, we are continually arraying ourselves against Thee; and Thou continuest forgiving with long-suffering patience, with gentleness unmatched. Thou, everlasting and grand in the glory of Thy nature, art bearing with us, and carrying us as it were in Thy bosom, that Thou mayest develope by thy patience and goodness those supernal traits that shall yet make us fit for Heaven and Thine own society,

We bless Thee for Thy faithfulness; we bless Thee for Thy patient continuance in well-doing towards us; we are saved by Thy goodness—it is our only hope. There could be no expectation of perseverance in life, none of triumph in death, none of immortality, were it not found in the nature of Thy greatness and goodness. And now we beseech Thee, that we may not plead this argument as a reason why we shall go on in sin, that grace may more and more abound. May everything that is in us be touched with honour, conscience, love, and gratitude; and may we desire to consecrate our lives within and without, of all thought or action, of spirit or body, our whole body and soul; may we consecrate all to the service of our God; for it is our reasonable sacrifice. We owe ourselves to Thee; we do justly thus judge, that "if one died for all, then were all dead, and He died that those who live should henceforth not live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them." So may we live, and more and more abundantly may the fruit of our life answer to the faithfulness of Thy labour in us and for us.

We beseech Thee that Thou wilt help every one in Thy presence according to their needs; for as rains fall down, and yet serve every plant according to its own nature, coming forth in different colours, different blos-

soms, and different fruit, so let Thy grace, which we may not see, yet work in each one of us the things that we specially and individually need. May we remember that we are before Thee as those that are sick before the benevolence of their physician ; and may we not be ashamed to come to God because of the thoughts which we have of ourselves, or as if God had the thoughts which other men have of us. However poor we may be, however feeble in mind, however little of value to society, however we may have sinned, and done wickedly and corruptly in deceits and hypocrisies, and in long continuance therein, whatever may be our facility towards evil, and our slow and burdensome way towards goodness, Thou art One that canst not hear the first risings of desire unaffected ; and that which is in us as the faint trickling of a drop, springs up as the motion of ocean-tides in Thee ; and Thou art ready to take us in the greatness of Thy being and not according to our own inward strength alone, but according to our power multiplied and made great by Thy power.

May every one venture upon God, not in presumption, but humbly ; conscious of weakness and of want, needing God as the hungry body needs bread and the thirsty lips water ; may we come to Thee as the bread of life, and as the flowing river of our life. We beseech Thee that there may be none who shall complain that they are outcasts, none who shall knock and find no opening, none who shall reach out empty hands drawn back as empty. We beseech Thee that Thou wilt fulfil Thy promises, according to the measure of Thine own declaration, and do exceeding abundantly more for us than we ask or think.

Our life in this sphere is passing ; we are as shadows which travel as summer winds across the field ; we are

making haste to go up unto Thee, O God; may we every day find that with each onward step of time there is an upward step in character; may we find that we are coming nearer to God, and know that we are becoming like him; may we feel that we are coming near to the heavenly host, in that our spirit is being made like unto theirs; and so may we have the evidence of advancing immortality, in the advance of all those things that shall make immortality a blessedness and a boon of God to us.

Bless, we beseech Thee, the sick; comfort them in their sickness. Bless the poor; sustain them in their poverty.

Bless the bereaved; comfort them in the midst of Thy strokes that have desolated their joys. If there be frost that hath extinguished their garden and all its blossoms, may they remember that frosts come, and spring comes again; and may they hope in God. We beseech Thee that thou wilt sustain those who are under temptation, and let them not be tempted more than they are able to bear. O Lord Jesus, stand by them; and in the day of their trial, hold them up for Thine own name's sake.

Be with those that are burdened with the cares of life; may they be manful in their duties; may they go forward and do the work of God in their own affairs with diligence and with gladness. May they not shrink from the battle and the warfare of life, but everywhere carry Christ; so that He shall be honoured in everything that they do.

May we all go forward; and at last may this church, —we that sing together, rejoicing in sweet and heavenly sympathies together,—may this great embodied church march chanting and glorifying God from earth to

heaven, there to know each other; and may it be our inexpressible joy for ever to celebrate Thy praise, Thy faithful patience of love, which has brought us safely from earth there; and we will unite together in heaven, as feebly and imperfectly here we unite together, in ascribing the praise of our salvation to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

NEED OF GOD.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

Our Heavenly Father, we are drawn to Thee by our wants. Every day our needs remind us of Thee; and Thou hast taught us thus to interpret our necessities, and we are called to God with every hour and at every moment. Be pleased to meet us; be pleased to reveal Thyself to us. And since Thou art the light and the life of every one—since Thou art the bread and the meat upon which we live—since Thou art all in all—grant that we may behold Thee supplying our necessities. We rejoice that we again hail the morning, which is the chiefest and best of all the week. We admire the place; we rejoice together. And while our thoughts are half drawn downward and outward by memories of the past, here we are drawn upward again, and are lifted into the presence of our God. Grant, then, while we shall pursue, for our edification, the exercises of public instruction and worship, that we may have Thy helping Spirit. May we understand Thy truth, and feel its significance and power. May we rejoice together, and in the fellowship of song draw near to Thee; may we be able to pray, because Thou dost excite the desire and lead the way; may all the exercises of our public devotion, and all the joy and worship of our homes to-day, be divinely blest. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

We rejoice, O Lord our God, that we are made to need Thee. We are not created and dispersed, as are

the ostriches of the desert, that go abroad upon their desolate errands over the sand from the moment of their birth; but we are made to lie in the bosom of thy love, and to receive our growth of Thee. More than little children need their parents, do we need Thee; for every part of our life needs Thee. Our whole body calls out for Thee upon that earth which Thou sustainest by Thy right hand. We stand by that wisdom which guides the spheres. Our destiny is controlled, and Thou art obliged to guard us in all our wide circuits, wandering like flying stars.

Thou art the One that dost pierce the distance, and whose arm of might is felt in the utmost recesses and distances of creation. Though we need this sustaining power of God, sent down upon us in suns and rains, in times and seasons, how much more do we need Thee within, to know how to lead forth our thoughts, how to form all our dispositions, and to connect our separate parts of experiences into a consistent whole and choice character! This is beyond our knowledge; for we know not how to touch the springs of our own lifepowers, or touch them but ignorantly. Thou hast fashioned us within and without; and Thou art to us a father indeed, and an everlasting teacher, guiding, influencing, and constraining; and we rejoice that we are thus necessitous of Thee. In the very sources of our life we call out for God; for Thou art supreme in excellence, Thou art glorious in holiness, Thou art wonderful in praises. They that are disabused of their flesh, and stand before Thee in all the glorious liberty of spiritual life—they behold Thee, and beholding, break forth into joy; and the joy of those that are thus made rich in happiness is the peace of Heaven.

We are glad, O Lord, that Thou art such a one, and

that Thou art pleased to call Thyself our Father, the everlasting Father, though the mighty God. And though we are at the extremities of creation, though all our way up to greatness is yet to be walked and travelled, yet we rejoice that Thou art pleased to call us Thine own, and to teach us that Thy heart yearns after us, that where Thou art there we may be also.

Now, we beseech of Thee, O Lord our God, that Thou wilt fill us this day with a sense of Thy graciousness and goodness. May a sense of God banish our doubts and needless fears. May we feel that Thou dost know how to sustain Thyself and Thine administration, and yet take care of guilty and sinful creatures, that their faults may not be their ruin. May we rejoice in believing, though our transgressions have been many, and though our offences may have been heinous. May we stand in the full faith of that wondrous divine wisdom which knows how to rescue us without jeopardy to any other interests. We do not understand how. What do we understand of Thee, or of anything which is a part of Thine infinity? But we believe that Thou art, and that Thou canst have mercy on whom Thou wilt. Thou art not hedged in by our prejudices, nor by our restrictions, nor by any necessities of Thy government; but Thou takest counsel from Thine own royalty, Thou askest the generosity of Thy heart; and by that love which is infinite in all its directions and attributes—by that, Thou dost take counsel, and then dost as seems best to Thee. Thus we stand surrounded by all-transcendent grandeur of divine love.

We know that we are unworthy: every day we feel that we are more than unworthy. We feel that if Thou wert to administer according to any scheme of strict justice —if Thou wert to measure our life by any law, or by our

own consciousness of what is fit and becoming — we know that we could not stand for an hour. Thou art not a judge, but Thou art our Father; Thou dost not wish to judge, unless we press through all Thy mercies and compel Thee to accept us only as evil. Thou wilt not be a judge to us; Thy desire is to be a friend to the friendless: Thy longing is to be a father to us. Thou dost come and beg for companionship, for Thy sake and for ours. We beseech Thee that we may rejoice in this, that there is an administration possible wherein love may do its royal work; and in this power, grandeur, wisdom, and love of God, we have all our hope and place all our expectation.

Now, we beseech Thee, that this may not lead to presumption. May we not harden ourselves, and of necessity be cast out from the favour of divine love, by believing that Thou wilt do all things in spite of our recreancy and against our contumacy. May we rather be led by the goodness of God to repentance. May we be ashamed to treat Thee ill because Thou treatest us well. May we be ashamed to sin because Thou art willing to forgive. We would not so treat any earthly friend, and oh deliver us from the ignominy that shall so offend Thee or so treat God. We beseech of Thee that we may heartily repent, day by day, of conscious imperfection and folly; and wilt Thou strengthen us, not according to our wisdom in what we need; give us, but according to Thy wisdom: for we know how we every day overrule our children, and think further than they think, and prepare more than they dream is needful, and do a thousand times more by the light of our larger life and experience than they would desire if they should speak their wants; and how little of all that we do do, they ask. So we beseech of Thee, according to the royalty

of Thy greatness above ours, that Thou wilt do for us exceeding abundantly, more than we ask or think.

And we beseech of Thee that we may have the confirmation of that blessed estate, the expectation of which, and the sense of its near approach, affords us consolation, when the time shall come in which we shall stand free from imperfection, and be worthy of the divine loving. We cannot bear for ever to be a burden upon Thy bosom. We cannot bear for ever to think that Thou art obliged to put forth mercy and to forgive at every single step. We do not love to weary Thy patience or hang for ever upon the hands of Thy love. O our God, we rejoice that there shall come a day when it shall not be so; when we shall be gathered with those that are garnered, when we shall go with those that are gone, when we shall rise with those that have flown upward, and are to-day chanting their joy in the ears of Jehovah. We rejoice that we shall inherit what they know who have the fruition of that which we expect to be hereafter. And in all the steps that yet are to be taken, in all the experiences of life, in heart troubles, in passions to be borne, in trials, in sorrows, in heartaches, in yearnings, longings, and unsatisfyings; in temptations and struggles, in downfalls or in uprising victories; in all that we bear, or endure, or achieve, or suffer, grant that we may have a sense of God with us,—God with us in providence, God with us more blessed than that, in the Spirit witnessing in our spirit, touching every thought, imbuing every affection, and dwelling with us as a friend with a friend, by the sweet affinities of like feeling.

Now, we beseech Thee, O God, that Thou wilt so give Thyself unto us, as the bread of life; for if thus Thou art ministering to us Thou wilt become as our food, as our drink, and as our raiment. Thou wilt be to

us as a shadow of a great rock in a weary land. We shall find in Thee all that the earth fails to secure us; Thou wilt supplement every joy, Thou wilt make every experience of gladness yet higher gladness; Thou wilt make things seemingly pure, seven times greater in purity; Thou wilt deepen all true affections, and efface all base ones; Thou wilt build us up into all truth, justice, rectitude, and loveliness, for Thine own sake and for ours; and so may our life be a life hidden with God.

We pray that Thou wilt bless those that stand in Thy presence together this morning. How unlike are we one to another, and how exactly alike are we before Thee! How different in our parentage, how wondrously different in our education, how different in all the parts of our nature, and in all those habits that have been formed upon them; in our views, prejudices, and associations; so different that we scarcely know how to get along with each other, because our pride teaches us to put emphasis on the things in which we differ one from another; but Thou lookest upon us in the things we agree. All of us are children of the dust, all of us have common weaknesses, all of us are alike temptable, stumbling, and falling. All depend upon Thee in the great needs of our being, all marching with one step toward the glorious disenthralment of the eternal sphere; all of us are redeemed by Christ's sufferings and righteousness; all waiting for the promise of the Father. How many and how great are the things that bind us together—that stamp upon us the name of God, and give us a common brotherhood!

We beseech Thee that we may feel this high and solemn fellowship, this grandeur and glory of unity, every day when we come together to worship. May we be

lifted above form, and carried above all mere exponents of truth, and stand in the fellowship of those blessed truths in Christ Jesus. May we learn to love one another, not with mere sentiment, but with truth, and a charity that will show itself in all the phases of life. May we feel that to love is better than to be great—is better than to be refined—is better than to be wise; that love takes precedence of all prophecy, of every kind of knowledge, and of the gift of tongues; that love is higher than hope and faith, and is the very royalty of God.

Bless those that need special comfort this morning, and we pray that Thou wilt grant unto them those whisperings which we may never utter without knowing the conscious peace which comes from God's touch. Oh do Thou strengthen those that have troubles ahead; may they not be afraid of them; may they go as shipmasters go, sailing not only in the day, but through the night, upon the sea; and though they see no land, may they have Thy word that shall be a sure guide to them; and as Thou hast said that all things shall work together for good, may they not be afraid to go into trouble, but may they be saved by hope and by trust in God. Are any in affliction? have any thought that their life was wellnigh crushed out of them? May they now rise up from their desolations to be ashamed that they thought themselves overthrown, and never again to be sped out of God's hand. May they feel that they can never be separated from the love of God in Christ Jesus, and that they are touched with trouble only that they may be more gloriously builded up for the eternal world; and if they know it not by Thy teaching, yet may they believe that all things are meant to work for their good. Teach them how to bear what they cannot understand, but

more and more to take the spiritual discernment of what the chastisements and the dealings of God are with them. Bless Thou those who may be strangers, and although they may feel themselves to be strangers may they nevertheless have the fellowship and welcome of friends. Since they are in their Father's house, why are we not their brethren? They are of our kindred, and are walking with us towards our Father's house. Grant, we beseech Thee, that those that are desolate, those that have come sick, those that have come hither with heart-ache, those that have no comforters nor counsellors, may find Thee so comforting that this house shall be to them the sweetest place on earth, and an anticipation of that blessed world where God shall be their God, and all tears shall be wiped from all eyes. And to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be praise for ever. Amen.

GOD'S GREATNESS MAN'S SECURITY.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

We thank Thee, our Father, that we are drawn by Thine invisible hand, and that we are permitted, day by day, to recognize the signal and the invitation to come boldly to the Throne of Grace to obtain mercy and help in time of need. Grant us this morning with Thine invitation Thy blessing, even the gift of the Holy Ghost. By Thy life inflame ours; and chiefly give us life in that part which brings us near to Thee and near to heavenly realities. May the world be as the ocean is afar off, the thunder of whose waves is lost, whose ceaseless agitation is forgot. To us may there be no sound of trouble, nor remembrance of care, nor distress of any kind. Hide us to-day in Thy pavilion, and in Thy sanctuary so graciously meet us and so abundantly bless us, that it shall be indeed to us the very gate of heaven. Wilt Thou help us to read Thy Word to profit? Wilt Thou help us to speak forth from it counsels of truth and wisdom? Wilt Thou help us while we draw reverently near to Thee in prayer, and grant that it may not be an unfamiliar way to our footsteps. Help us to sing together, rejoicing in the fellowship of common song, and offering up praise to Thee. May the exercises in the sanctuary, in our own homes, or in the privacy of our hearts, please Thee and profit us, for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

Thou, O God, art exalted and art supreme; there is no counsellor for Thee; there is none that is equal, none

that can dispute Thine authority, or wage war against Thy power. Thy very thought is destruction, is annihilation; the very movement of Thy will is mightier than the thunders of the air. Thou canst with the very turn and sweep of Thy being, brush all created intelligences out, and they are as dust. Nations before Thee are but as the drop of the bucket, as the light dust of the balance, a very little thing. Thou sittest on the circle of the earth; all its inhabitants are but as grasshoppers; and yet, though Thou art by Thy greatness so transcendently lifted above us, it is by Thy greatness that Thou art brought exceedingly near to every one of us. Thy power, wisdom, and controlling agency are not Thee; they are but as Thy hand. In Thy soul is royalty and grandeur and divinity, indeed, for they are unwasted, they are unquenched and endless as the love from which we are born, by which we were nursed, in which we exist and live. There is that spirit which goes forth and fills the heaven and fills the earth, and is as an atmosphere of creation,—for Thou dost enwrap all things that Thou makest; and the constancy of Thy love and regard are over all Thy works; and in the heights and in the depths, and throughout all space, boundless and infinite, Thou art God over all, blessed for ever, and for ever loving.

We praise Thee; we rejoice in Thee. It is not a trouble to us to be exalted and gathered up into the greatness of Thy being. We love to lose the thought of our personality and our identity. As children that love their parents, and are never so near to a blessed perfection in themselves as when gathered in the arms of fondling love; so we are never so strong, so clear in ourselves and in our own right, so firm, as when we are lost in the sympathy and glorious goodness of our God. Be

pleased to-day, then, to shine abroad and gather us by Thy shining. As in the morning the sun goes forth and gathers all the drops of dew that wait his coming, for their glory and their life to depart, so gather all of our grateful thoughts to-day, all the loves that are tremulous upon us to-day, all our gladness and our praise; and though it is, in the proportion of Thy being, as dew-drops are in proportion to the sun, yet Thou art One that art not worshipped by dominion.

Thou art pleased with the humble and with the contrite, with such as are of a broken spirit; Thou art pleased with the first and most imperfect sigh of repentance and forsaking of evil and yearning to the truth. Thy smile is enough to bring Thee to us with sweet attraction and instant relief. We ask not that Thou shouldst accept an offering to-day glorious in its fulness; we come as imperfect creatures in the school of development; all that we bring is imperfect, and much is most sinful both by omission and commission. We come to Thee knowing that we are spared; that it is mercy which guards our hearts; that it is the long-suffering of God with our indolence, helplessness, pride, and selfishness, that gives us leave to be and to have comfort in being by drawing near. We come not bringing purified gold and silver as offerings to Thee; but faint, and hungry, and weary, and often discouraged, and conscious deeply of our own demerit and sinfulness.

We come before Thee because Thou hast revealed Thyself a God of tender mercy, a Saviour of sinners. Lift Thou upon us the light of Thy countenance, for we are in darkness. Send us mercies for we are weak. Love us, not because we are able to repay Thee, but because thou knowest, in the royalty of Thy nature, how to love the unworthy and even the unlovely. Grant,

we beseech Thee, that to-day we may have developed towards us the Divine nature, in magnanimity, in generosity, in all tender mercy and kindness.

Are there those in Thy presence that have walked a weary way of life, and that wonder why they were born? Are there those that, often like Thy servant of old, have sat down in their wilderness and sighed and prayed that they might die? Wilt Thou draw near to such and rebuke their discontent and their want of faith? Rebuke the aimlessness of that life that longs to depart. Rebuke all that is wrong in them, yet tenderly; bind up their trouble, and reveal to them the purposes that Thou hast in their life now and hereafter, so that they shall be able to wait until God shall call them home.

Are there those in Thy presence whose way of life has always seemed dark to their understanding? Grant that they may live by faith and not by the knowledge of their own outward life. Are there those that mourn before Thee, humbled in the consciousness of repeated transgression? Wilt Thou speak to them those words of peace that are irresistible in the disturbed conscience? May they know that Thou hast forgiven them, and put round about them the arms of Thy comforting grace. Speak such words of comfort that they shall not dare to go from Thee any more. O Lord Jesus, Thou art a fountain of consolation; and comfort is most needed in the clouded conscience, in the broken spirit, in the discouraged faith.

To any that have backslidden—to any that are disconsolate in view of their evidences of piety or their want of evidence—to any that vacillate, that break their resolutions day by day, and who have occasion to set down grievous and bitter things of themselves and against themselves,—O Lord, wilt Thou be gracious unto all such;

encourage them to gird up their loins anew for the conflict of life. Thou didst not call them deceptively; Thou didst tell them that they were to take the cross and follow Thee. Thou didst teach them they were to be soldiers, not with constant victories, but with constant defeats until the end, when they should have a glorious victory in their final release. May they persevere, and not be distressed by the roughness of the way, nor by the number of their adversaries. Are any in Thy presence longing for a fuller communication of Thy grace and clearer visions of God? May they see to it that this is not another form of insidious selfishness; that they do not desire to sit upon the top of the mount in glorious transfiguration while Satan casts many to the ground possessed. May they not desire their own satisfaction even in the vision of God; may they desire, above all things, such a view of Thee as shall make them more active, more self-denying, more cheerful, more redolent of the Christian graces, more radiant in the light of holiness.

Are there any in Thy presence who remember when, in their childhood, they were led along the path to the sanctuary? Are there any who remember the stillness of their home and their childhood Sabbath, who have since cast aside prayer and restraint—who have broken, without compunction, the laws of God, and gone away from all the lessons and teachings of their youth? Are there any upon whom steal gentle thoughts, who yearn somewhat against their own purposes, and are musing what these things shall mean? Art Thou not preparing in these earlier breaths of spring to send summer to their souls?

Be pleased, O God, to melt obdurate hearts. Be pleased to lead to generous repentance those who have

wasted all the bounties of God in making themselves selfish and proud. How hateful must they seem to themselves in the Judgment Day if they shall go up unprepared for it, all the wealth of God's kindness and mercy having been perverted to their destruction! We pray that Thou wilt turn them back before it is too late; put their feet in the right way, and give them a song of praise and rejoicing in God. Oh, how great must be the theme of gratulation and thanksgiving in some if they shall ever, through grace, redeem their souls from destruction! Oh, if we are to love in the proportion in which we are forgiven, what wealth of love, what depths of love do we owe to Thee for Thy wondrous mercy to us, mercy untold and that cannot be told, now nor ever!

We pray that Thou wilt bless, not only us, but all whom our hearts remember. What pilgrims are our loves,—that go forth north, south, east, and west,—royally gathering in great multitudes! Be pleased to make our very thoughts the ministers of Thy mercy. May those whom we love find their hearts flowing already as if some angel sent by our prayers ministered them.

Bless all the congregations that worship Thee to-day; for although we may mark distinctions, and learn to suspect, and to hate even and divide ourselves against ourselves and our brethren, are not all men sinful at the best, and are not all striving with their faces towards Jerusalem in the great imperilled flock which Thou art leading and guarding?

Be pleased to make the protecting palm of God to be over our hemisphere; and though there is rage, and wrath, and resistance,—though there are wars and rumours of wars, agitations and threatenings and tumults,—be pleased, in Thine own infinite peace, still to look

calmly on, and restrain the wrath of man within the appointed bounds of Thy providence, and by the things which men mean for wrong work out righteousness; and by the very passions with which men seek to break over the bounds of God's justice, be pleased to establish the things that are right and destroy the things that are wrong; and wilt Thou breathe into Thy people a heart of integrity and a sense of divine justice. Grant that they may hold the truth in love, and justice in love, and firmness in love; and may they be clothed with love as with a garment, and go forth to all purposes of equity and to all wisdoms imbued with this divinest wisdom.

And now, if thou hast appointed us for judgments by reason of our great sins, we beseech Thee that we may not be as brute beasts that know not why they are stricken and cower down. May we understand why God is in judgment with us. May we not look round about for the sins of men in general, but may we understand the sins of luxury, of selfishness, of lust, of dominion, and our carelessness of God's creatures, our supreme indifference to those things which are in the heart of God as the very elements of life itself—our Heaven-defying infidelities in our treatment of our fellow-men. We beseech Thee that we may repent of those sins which Thou art out in judgment against; we pray that Thou wilt, in Thine own manner and in Thine own time, and by Thine own appointed instruments, bring to pass the day of peace,—a day in which peace shall be unbroken, because it shall stand upon the unshaken foundations of equity. May justice rule throughout all our States, and love be the spirit of administration. May divine wisdom thus supersede human passion and wickedness in all our land.

Raise up, as Thou hast never failed to raise in times past, men that shall be God's messengers in the time of peril. Thou gavest to our fathers counsellors and leaders after Thine own heart; Thou didst rear up in times of peril men that were leaders and counsellors. They are not all gone from Thy mind and power; Thou canst yet raise up men and give them the wisdom the times require. Give forth men who may understand the counsels of God, and know how to bear them successfully to the discordant minds of others. Accept our thanks that the world is not permitted longer to slumber; it is not pleasant to be awakened, but it is joyful to faith to know that Thou art abroad, that Thou art shaking the nations, that the tremblings of the earth underneath are but the resoundings of God's footsteps coming to judgment for purposes of mercy. Even so, go forward.

We are glad for Italy, for Europe, for America. We are glad ever when Thou comest, even when Thou comest to us and to the world robed in clouds and darkness; no brightness is bright without the presence of our God; and no darkness can drive us or be terrible in any wise that carries God with it; for we wait for Thy law, we wait for the working out of Thine immutable counsels; bring all of Thy firm decrees to an end in Thine own appointed way. O Lord God, consummate Thy purposes, and redeem the whole earth; until that glorious day of prediction shall come, when all men shall dwell together in peace and fertile love, when none shall have occasion to say, "Know the Lord," for all shall know Thee, from the least unto the greatest. Hear us and accept of us for Christ's sake. Amen.

JOY IN THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

O God, so manifest Thyself here every Sabbath, that hither shall come the poor, the sorrowful, the tempted, the outcast, and the distressed. May there never come a wanderer here to be sent away without a portion; and may this be a house of mercies, as a token that it is the house of God. Wilt Thou bless us in all our further life, and grant that all the streams of our varied life may flow heavenward, until, at last, we come to Mount Zion before God; and to Thy name shall be the praise of our salvation, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

Thou eternal God! before the mountains were brought forth or ever Thou hadst formed the earth, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God. Thou dwellest in the fulness of the praises of heaven. The unconstrained hearts of those whom Thou dost bless, bless Thee again. Thou dost make all Thy creatures happy, and art Thyself receiving the testimonies of their joy. We are glad for Thy supremacy; we are glad that our Supreme God is such a one as Thou art. We rejoice that we were born, since now there is open to us such a destiny. We have such help of Thee, and such hope

through Jesus Christ; we have so glorious a home towards which we are going, that, though there be peril and pain, and trials by the way, yet we are glad for the journey, and anticipate that day when we shall look back upon all the perils of this life as men look upon retreating storms spanned with the bow of God. We rejoice that we may comfort ourselves without waiting for heaven; yea, that Thou art giving us the beginning now of its spirit, and causing us to taste some of its joys; enough to cheer us; enough for the way.

We beseech Thee, O Lord our God, that we may look upon our life not as some chance, not as some tumultuous whirl in which we have but a chance. May we understand that this, which is to us so much disturbed and stirred up and strangely contrary, is appointed of Thee to be a school; and that men are to be educated in this life by contact with its affairs, and by the discharge of its duties. May we understand that those things which befall us do not spring from the ground; that our trials and our troubles are not like arrows sent by some adversary; that the restrictions and the difficulties, the burdens borne, the tasks painful to be performed, are not imposed upon us as if they were easy; that there is an overruling wisdom, a guiding hand, a purpose of life; and that though we do not go with our teacher intelligently, understanding what he means, yet Thou dost guide us and conduct us. May we be disposed to accept each day therefore as a day appointed of God; and may we search in all our affairs how to approve ourselves before our great Teacher; and may each day educate us in truth, in justice, in honour, in love, in fidelity, in patience, in meekness, in all things that are good. May there be no day in which we are not victorious over some temptation, over some evil; no day in which

we are not heroic in some endurance or achievement; no day in which we are not imitators of Thy divine example.

We beseech Thee that thus everything may become sacred to us, nothing trivial, nothing unnecessary, nothing strange. Let us not fall into the folly of measuring Thy wisdom by the rule of our unknowing, because we cannot explain Thy ways, nor see Thy reasons, supposing each to be strange and wonderful. Why shouldst not Thou, O God, in the wide power and sweep of Thy being, work beyond our understanding? We rejoice that Thou art so much greater than we; we cannot understand Thy goings, except in parts: but we rejoice to believe that we are emerging; we are coming through our ignorance. Already there are streaks of light, and by-and-by the day shall dawn, and we shall go forth through that gate, hated of men and beloved of Thee, and stand in that land where, ransomed and released, enlightened and sanctified, we shall see Thee as Thou art, and all things as they are; and delusions and deceptions and appearances shall have fled away for ever, and we shall know even as we are known.

We rejoice in that coming glory; we have a gentle expectation and an humble hope of it. May we not fall by the way; may we not become in anywise castaways, and so come short of this eternal inheritance; for what matters it what we suffer here if that shall be ours? What avails it what we have here, if we lose that eternal glory? We beseech Thee that Thou wilt teach us how to teach others—how to teach those that are dependent upon our example and instruction—how to teach our children and those that are put beneath us as pupils. May we know how to guide them in secular and worldly things, that they shall become monitors and teachers of

better things. And we beseech Thee that the young in our midst may never lose the purity of youth, nor be tarnished by early wickedness. From the morning of their life may they be crowned with religion; may they go forth as the children of God, rejoicing in their calling; may they be guided over all experiences of life, of knowledge, of truth, and of virtue; may they be guided by Thy good providence and spirit, so that every one of them shall assuredly take hold of eternal life.

Oh, let the prayers long delayed at last be answered in behalf of those who have had Christian training, but who have grown up to forget their training. Bring back the wanderers from the ends of the earth, and from all hopeless experiences. Bring back the children of the covenant, consecrated by the faith of parents, and for whom ten thousand prayers have gone up. O Lord, remember them. Is it not the time for the release of some of the captives? Art Thou not remembering the sinner already, and giving liberty to some that are in bondage to Satan? Even so come, Lord Jesus, for their release that sit in darkness, and give them light, and lift upon them the joys of Thy salvation.

We beseech Thee that Thou wilt bless all for whom we should pray—Thy people of every name; divided in name, may they be united in affection. May those things which tend to divisions, to envyings, to jealousies, and to confusions among Thy churches, pass away. May justice, love, and purity stand in the sanctuary. May all Thy people be substantially united by their common love to Christ, and by love to each other. Fill the earth with Thy glory; fulfil all the blessed predictions of Thy word; gather in Jew and Gentile; and may the glory of the Lord fill the earth as the waters fill the sea; and to Thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

DIVINE WISDOM ABOVE ALL HUMAN.

An Evening Prayer.

We rejoice, O Lord our God, to believe that those confusions and turmoils of life that seem to us strange and mysterious, are before Thee simple; and those things which, to our uninterpreting eye, are evils, mischiefs, and wastes, to Thine eye are messengers of mercy, guiding and conducting influences; for Thou art bringing many sons and daughters home to glory; and we are not large enough nor wise enough to understand the footsteps of that way which Thou treadest in dealing with men. Our sanctuary is built of men's hands, and the few ways by which we know how to touch the heart are indeed meagre and unsatisfactory! and yet we measure Thee in the greatness of Thy power and in the richness of Thy resources, by our own miserable expedients and experience. We forget that Thou art the king of time and the God of all the earth; that Thou dwellest in eternity, in light unapproachable; that all power and wisdom are with Thee. Endless and diversified means are Thine, and Thou art, through ways which seem to us to reverse

all good, bringing good to pass, light out of darkness, good out of evil, and order out of confusion; so that all the earth doth serve Thee, even hates, and wastes, and wars. Thou dost restrain the wrath of man, and cause the remainder thereof to praise Thee.

And now we adore Thee, O Thou blessed God, Thou that art exalted above all description; Thou that canst not be described, nor enough loved or admired; Thou that art in heaven, surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand now congenial spirits, we, too, though far down, are in Thy train—we too, feel this divine impulse, and though with imperfect thought, and with mixed feelings, and with impure hearts, yet claim Thee God according to the measure of our power, as they do in heaven according to the measure of their power. We rejoice in the blessedness of their victory, nor do we repine that it is not given us to be conquerors upon earth. Ours is yet the warfare, theirs the rest. We yet are in bodies that require our severest government; we are attempting to bring every thought and feeling into subjection to Jesus Christ's law; we are wrestling with pride that refuses coercion, and watching selfishness that presses like a flood.

O God, we are yet endeavouring to contend against principalities, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience; we are labouring in every way of life to perfect the spirit of Christ in us, and it doth not cost any sadness in us to think that there are some that have finished this work; that they were ours, but now are Thine. We are glad for their victory, nor are we discouraged with the battle because they have gone first, but rather we are enheartened; and we are sure that the path that gave them victory is the path that Christ trod and that we shall tread.

And we take comfort to-night that there seem to come to us from the very heavens those sweet and nourishing influences which we so much need in life. Parents speak to us by ten thousand memories; dear friends gone from us speak back again, and our yearnings take hold of those that were our children, but are now Thine angels.

And we are glad for heaven, and for them that are dwelling therein, and for them that are blessed by Thee; and it is sweet and comforting to us to think that the same voices that we taught to speak are now praising God in heaven in strains unknown to us. Nor are we envious that our children have outrun their parents, while we are glad for that rest which remaineth for us. None shall take our place; there is enough and to spare, and we go forward in our journey of life knowing that we are journeying onwards to sunrise; that the darkness is behind us, and the light more and more before us. And we desire to be more faithful and courageous, and enduring unto the end.

Wilt Thou minister of Thine own good spirit to every one in Thy presence, according to their several necessities? Thou only canst read the heart; Thou knowest far better than they know. We know not at all for others, but Thou knowest what they need: and we pray that, when they ask for things which they want rather than need, Thou wilt press through their unwisdom by Thine own divine wisdom, and give them that which they need. May Thy will be done in them, and may they desire that it may be done, and desire to have every thought, every purpose, and every tendency of life baptized in the spirit of God.

Forgive us the sins of our past lives. Forgive us that goodness is so feeble in us, and that selfishness, pride,

and worldliness are so strong; that when we should have been fruitful under such teachings and influences of Christ, we are unfruitful. Forgive us everything that tarnishes the brightness that Thou dost see in Thy beloved, and grant, we beseech of Thee, that we may have that peace which God gives to those whose sins are pardoned. Help us to-night, as we dwell for the hour together, to read, to sing, to speak, to hear, and to think to our edification in spiritual things, and glorify Thyself by our joy, by our worship, by our growth in grace, by our suffering, by our life, and by our death; and when through death we come again to life, we will give the praise of our salvation to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND PENITENCE.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

Thou that commandest light to shine out of darkness; we thank Thee that Thou hast brought forth the morning light, and poured it upon this day of rest, filling it that we might take refreshment this day; and now grant that we may have not alone that pervading light in which we stand bodily, but more that joyful and peaceful light by which Thou dost shine into the soul—Thine own Spirit—bringing day to our night, that art bringing warmth to our dulness and deadness. Now we beseech of Thee that all the accustomed exercises of worship in this house on this day may receive from Thee divine inspiration. Empower thy word, that it may carry forth the thought and will of God to our apprehension and belief. Give force and power, we beseech of Thee, to all the efforts which are made for instruction, conviction, humiliation, and penitence, out of Thy sacred oracles. Wilt Thou, O God, teach us how to come near to Thee, sorrowing in prayer, and to commune with Thee in penitence? And when our souls begin to discern something of Thy glory, may it be our longing to offer Thee praises, and may we have a fellowship to-day of rejoicing in song, and may all the excercises of the Sabbath at home be blest, and may it be a day of refreshment and great peace, which we ask for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

Our heavenly Father, we come not to make known our wants as if Thou needest that we should inform Thee,

but to express our gladness, to utter thanksgiving, to make confession of sin and supplication—for Thou hast made it pleasant to us and acceptable unto Thee that we should hold communion with Thee; and whenever we take Thy sacred name upon our lips and enter into prayer, Thou dost bring near to us the glorious truths of our relationship to Thee. We are lifted out of the insignificance in which we find ourselves; we have some faint glimpses of that immortality which is ours; we are emboldened then to seek unto Thee, since we are Thine and Thou art ours; and we find our inward life strengthened and augmented, that in this communion with Thee our daily life becomes light, our duty easy, our way plain, and all things are more bright when we have visited Thy presence and held communion with Thee.

We thank Thee that the access is not barred. The poorest, the most ignorant, the most unlettered may call Thee Father. There is no one that lives to whom Thou hast not given the power of prayer. Every want is a supplication, every yearning a supplication before Thee. All our aspirations for things purer, higher, and diviner —are not these excited in us by the working of Thy Spirit? Then Thou leadest these excited thoughts up to Thee, and thus dost return our petitions in blessings innumerable.

We thank Thee for the rich experience we have had in days past—for the present rich influences of the Holy Spirit; we thank Thee that we have hope for the time to come. Thou that hast begun a work in us wilt not leave it unfinished; Thou wilt perfect it for our sake, but yet more for Thine own,—for Thou dost love us, and Thou hast taken us to be a part of Thine own, and wilt yet present us spotless before Thy Father's throne to be monuments of Thy faithfulness, wisdom, and love.

And now, O Lord Jesus, we desire to confess our unworthiness; the limitation of our faculties, the poverty of our life, the meagreness with which we do that which is right, the exceeding imperfection of our whole life, and the absolute sinfulness of much of it. Every day we try Thy patience with transgression. We rejoice that Thou art God and not man, or Thy love would be weary of the task which Thou hast undertaken; but we do not desire, because Thou art merciful, long suffering, and forgiving, to trespass upon Thy grace, and to sin that grace may abound.

We desire, by a view of Thy goodness to us sinners, to be made more and more ashamed of our transgressions; we desire to turn from them, and with averted face to abhor them. Help us to resist our easily besetting sins, our inbred corruptions. Help us to take hold of all the parts of our disposition and affections of our nature which require remoulding; help us to have them inspired, improved, and pervaded by the love of God. May we not be discouraged in the way; may we not remember all the days past in which we have carried our load of sin and struggled with ill success; let not the shadow of the past gloom our future; but may we forget the things that are behind, and press forward towards to the mark for the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus; for Thou art ever-living; and because Thou livest, we shall live also

O God, Thou seest us afar off; and Thou dost run towards us and cast Thine arms about our neck; and before we can make our complaint, Thou, by Thy bounty and love, dost speak our pardon and receive us again into the household; and, behold! we that came to have a servant's place, that we might have bread to eat, wear the Son's robe and the ring and the sandal, and walk

again justified and dignified in our Father's house. We thank Thee for this mercy. We lift Jesus up as the brazen serpent in the midst of the bitten,—O Lord God, may many look and live, may many behold Thee as their strength, and may they find Thee a present help in time of need.

O Thou patient Saviour! O Thou teaching and illuminating Spirit! bring us forth into a clearer understanding of what it is to live a life of love and to be like God; and if we are attempting to live that life, be Thou patient with us in all our experiments, in our beginnings and failures, in our discouragements and retrocessions often, and by Thy grace hold us up in our moral weakness until we are strong to stand. Be a father to us; be a teacher to us; nourish and sustain us, till at last we are prepared to go forth from this scene of school and trial, and take part and lot in that higher sphere where men shall oppress men no more; where we shall not be imbruted in every part of our nature; where we shall behold the majesty of God and the glory of Divine wisdom. And to Thy name shall be the glory and the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit, for ever. Amen.

ENTIRE CONSECRATION.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

Our Heavenly Father—we are Thy children. Although we are weak and sinful, we are yet Thy children, preserved by Thy power, cared for by Thy love, redeemed by Thy grace. We beseech of Thee, this morning, that Thou wilt unveil our face that we may behold Thee. Thou art near us and around about us, but we are dark-minded and do not discern the traces of our God until Thou dost teach us, and then with sensible comfort we behold Thee where Thou wert not to our seeming before. Grant this morning that we may have this inward resurrection, this effulgence from Thee, that we may behold it. Draw us near to Thee by all our affections. May we worship Thee: may we trust Thee; may we be able to praise and rejoice before Thee. May Thy word stand upladen with divine meaning to us; may all our exercises of prayer and our singing together be in the sweet fellowship of a common love and experience. May this be a day blessed to our souls. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

Our Heavenly Father, Thine hand is ever open, and Thy heart is always kind. Thou dost not need our petitions to persuade Thee, yet Thou hast commanded us to draw near to Thee in prayer, and we have found out the reason in our own experience. It is blessed for us

to ask the things which we should receive even without asking. It is blessed to hunger before God, and then to take the bread as the gift of Thy love to our importunities.

We are made better when we are lifted into communion with Thee; we are made to feel Thy nearness and Thy glory—made to feel that Thou dost sympathize with us, and, in drawing near to Thee, we realize that Thou dost draw near to us. In Thy great goodness we stand, and as soon as we attempt to measure ourselves by any other rule, we come short. If we attempt to measure ourselves by our conscience, there is neither justice nor righteousness in us, and we find ourselves so exceedingly imperfect that there is no joy and no result of peace; but when we measure ourselves by Thy righteousness, when we reflect that we are children of a God that gives with grace infinitely, and that without stint—in the midst of Thy boundless compassions, and that it is the glory of Thy nature to do for those that do not deserve—that Thou art a God of grace, a God of love and mercies unspeakable—then we begin to find some ground for hope, some reason of confidence to look up, and our hearts are lightened.

We beseech, that we may know how to trust Thy goodness in such a way as that it shall inspire goodness in us. May we trust Thee in so wise a way that we shall feel ourselves being changed into Thine image. Deliver us from the wickedness of making account of Thy goodness, that we may go on to sin; deliver us from the temptations to such baseness and selfishness. May the goodness of God rather lead us to repentance. May it affect us with like honour and sensibility, and may we desire above all things to requite Thee with that which Thou givest us—confidence and love. And as Thou art

the benefactor, may we be obedient to Thee; as Thou art the Father, may we be the loving children. So plant our life in love, and nourish and perfect us in that spirit, that, when we leave these mortal bodies, we may be made fit to stand in that realm whose atmosphere and all whose occupations shall be love.

We beseech Thee, that Thou wilt help us in the conflicts which we wage in this life with things without and with things within. May we be able daily to bear our burdens, and to carry on our duties and various avocations in a truly Christian spirit. May we be sanctified by Thy Spirit, and made meet to be the children of light. Grant that we may not seek for sanctification apart from duty. May we look more upon our everyday experiences, as having a moral meaning, and as appointed of God to minister grace unto us; and whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, may we seek in it to glorify Thee. May we be patient, faithful, and truthful, filled with honour. May we be clothed with gentleness and with humility—seek, like Thee, to be full of all kindness one towards another—seek, the things which make for peace, and whereby one may edify another—live as seeing Him who is invisible—and knowing that the beginnings of eternity are here with us in time.

We pray that Thou wilt lift up the faces of those who look down with sorrow. Send light into their hearts who sit in darkness, and give cheer and hope to those that sit in despondency. May those that reason with themselves, and look inwardly, begin to see how foolish that is, and look up and behold the glory of Christ. May they see that in Him, and not in themselves, is their life and their salvation. Comfort those that are feeble-minded; and may those that have backslidden, and yet would return to the Shepherd and Bishop of their

souls, find grace in Thy sight. May all that mourn for sin find to-day pardon of God, and may all that long for a present help in trouble find Christ present and precious. May all those that desire to enter into covenant again with their Saviour—a covenant of life, of heart, and of spirit, oh grant that they may find it easy to-day to commune with Thee, and may they be drawn cheerfully and gladly, by Thy gracious Spirit, into covenant vows and obligations. May it not be hard for us to pledge ourselves to Thee ; but may it be a spontaneous act. May we rejoice, above all other things, to give ourselves to Christ Jesus, who gave himself for us, and whose life flows out divinely towards us.

Remember all those that are not with us this day—our dearly beloved brethren that, in Thy providence, are detained at home, or are scattered abroad through our land, and that, peradventure, are up and down in the places of the world. May Thy mercy go forth from the centre of Thy heart to-day, everywhere, and comprehend in its embrace all whom we love, all of whom we think, or for whom we desire. Bless the members of this church, and unite them together in the fellowship of a practical Christian life. Prepare them for all Thy righteous will ; prepare them for living, for dying, and for immortality in glory. We beseech Thee, that Thou wilt add to this church, from time to time, of such as shall be saved ; may there be many uniting with it, gathered from out of the world, with their faces cleared and filled with light, and turned to the New Jerusalem. Confirm those that are weak, restore those that have wandered, and bring back to the faith any that have gone forth from out of it. And that Thy work may not be in vain in our midst, may there be peace in our churches round about.

Strengthen those that preach the Gospel, that they may be able to do it with power from on high ; may they never faint ; may they go forth bearing precious seed—it may be weeping, but may they soon come again with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them ; and though the earth is full of violence, and though it be shaken to its foundation, yet may we be quiet, knowing that God rules in the army of the heavens. and in the armies of the earth, and that all things shall work together for the good of them that love Thee. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly. And to Thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

COMMUNINGS WITH JESUS.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

O God, Thou art in heaven and we upon earth; Thou art pure, we are sinful. Mighty art Thou, and full of infinite resources; we are crushed before the moth, and, in utter weakness, depend upon Thee for life and breath, and all things. We come to the source of our being, to the fountain of all our good, this morning, making acknowledgment of dependence, and supplicating for help. Wilt Thou give forth that influence which shall inspire in us holy thoughts and blessed desires? Take away those things that shall tempt the imagination, or the reason, or any of our passions and affections, and may we worship Thee to-day in the beauty of holiness. May Thy word glow, and every letter be as a lighted lamp. May the truths which we shall seek for our instruction to draw from it be truths like bread for the nourishment of our life. Help us to draw near to Thee in communion of prayer; help us to unite in the fellowship of song, and may everything that we do please Thee and profit us, for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

We thank thee, O Jesus, that thou hast appeared once for all and offered an everlasting sacrifice. Now Thou art gone into the temple, not made with hands, eternally built in heaven, and Thou dost appear for us there, before the throne of God; and art our intercessor

and our mediator. Thou dost represent Thy people in Thyself, and art for ever caring for them. Thine earthly tears and Thine earthly groans but symbolize Thy care, and the weight which lies upon Thee evermore; for the earth and all nations of men are Thine, and Thou art the sole guide of this weary pilgrimage of human life through all its conditions and its long outstretched periods. Thou, that art wonderful—Thou that art past comprehension, not so much by the metes and bounds of Thine existence, as by the quality of Thine actions, in patience, in love, in forgiving mercy, in gentleness, rare and without measure, in fulness and ever-watching versatilities of love and kindness—Thou that dost rear Thyself up before us in all the attitude and in the grandeur of God —Thou that dost carry the weak, and pity the sinful, and heal them of their sins—Thou that makest it the work of Thy lifetime to care for us, and to give us that divine education by which we shall become fit companions with Thee and Thine in heaven, we thank Thee.

We know our unworthiness of Thy care; we know we do in the best things soil our conduct, and oftentimes sin entirely; we confess our transgressions before Thee, that we may be healed. Do Thou deliver us from feigned confession? May we, from the heart, recount before Thee our unworthiness? and may we desire, and by faith accept the forgiveness of our sins?—for Thou needest not to be persuaded—Thou dost not stand reluctant and grant this as the extreme boon, but Thou art persuading us to persuade Thee. Thou dost desire to grant unto us every grace, and that abundantly. Lead us, then, we beseech Thee, that we may be made willing, in the day of Thy power, and that we may know how to work out our own salvation, since it is God that worketh in us. We

pray that Thou wilt humble us, that we may not think ourselves to be better than we are. We pray that thou wilt break pride in those hearts where it predominates and is despotic.

Wilt thou, we entreat, help every one, according to the nature of the help required by his disposition in the circumstances where he is placed, in the scenes in which he is tempted, and in the duties to which he is called? Thou, O God and Saviour, and Thou only, readest the heart as an open book—all is plain before Thee; there are no mysteries with Thee, and there can be no mistakes. We beseech thee, therefore, that Thou wilt use Thy wisdom to direct every one, and may we so far understand how blessed is the supremacy of God, that we shall be able to say, "Thy will be done," when it is most tried—when it seems most like yielding up our very life itself—still may we have faith to say, "Not our will, but thine."

We beseech Thee, O divine Saviour, that Thou wilt teach us how to bear our lot in life, if we are prospered, with moderation; if we are in trouble, with patience and cheerfulness. Hold us back on either hand from sin, and may we be conscious of our weakness and of our great exposedness to temptation. May we walk, therefore, softly every day, leaning upon the hand of God; may we live as in Thy presence, not forgetting that Thine eye is upon us—for what moment we forget Thee, we forget ourselves, and the moment we shield our conscience from Thy searching presence, we run into mischief and folly, and fall away. We need Thee as a staff on which to lean; we need Thee as a shield and buckler and sword, and we need Thee as the very bread and breath of life itself.

We beseech Thee, O Saviour Jesus, that Thou wilt

comfort those that are in trouble. If there be any grieved, afflicted, and heart-broken, to whom there can come no comforter, let such come in remembrance before Thee to-day, for Thou canst hear the voice of the heart when the lip is silent. Sanctify their afflictions, and grant that they may not be overborne by them, but come forth strengthened and purified, and made more meet for heaven. Sustain all that find themselves girded with severe duties and pressures, who at times are discouraged, and sigh to lay down the burden of duty or even of life itself. Rebuke impatience, and teach them how, when they can no longer live by sight, to live by faith. Grant unto them more and more manliness, courage, and strength, to carry forward the duties that are incumbent upon them.

Teach us how to be gentle one to another, how to prefer each other in honour, how to seek the things that belong to others' welfare and not our own alone. Teach us to be valiant for the defence of all things right, and may we know how to carry our rights in the spirit of love, and to use them for the benefit of others, rather than for our own selfish assertion. Grant that we may not be intoxicated, either by sympathy or by pleasure, or by worldly thoughts, feelings, prospects, and plans. May we know how to do Thy work in the midst of that which we call our own. May this whole life be to us a varied means of grace. Are any sick? Wilt Thou be near to them to-day? May their sickness be a lesson sent from Thee, teaching them both the frailty of their mortal bodies and the uncertainty of this life, and may it teach their hearts to go to the other life.

We pray that Thou wilt be near to all whom we love. Look upon the memories of those present—upon the heart yearnings of those present—upon those now whom

our thoughts search out and would name to Thee. Bless them abundantly, separated from us as they may be, and far off in the uttermost places of the earth. We rejoice on such a day as this to feel that in Christ Jesus they are all brought home to us again, and we are one with all whom we love. Remember all for whom our prayers are desired—the poor, the outcast, the uneducated child of neglect, and so of vice and of crime. Remember those in prisons, and grant we pray that they may not be made worse by punishment, but rather healed of evil and led to right ways. Remember the sick and the infirm—all that are in any way divested of the privileges of life. Oh grant that all classes and conditions of men may come up in remembrance before Thee.

Remember all the oppressed places of the earth in their weakness, and in their destruction. And we beseech Thee that those that are in priestly authority or in civil power, who employ their high prerogatives to oppress—may they be converted from the errors of their ways, or may they be made a mark of God's signal punishment and taken away, for the earth doth wait for its salvation. Thou hast promised that the day should come, and the highway of the Lord should be cast up, upon which the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. Now therefore we beseech Thee, O Thou that art to lead this earth forward through endless circles emancipated and glorified—the earth that for all its crying, for its groaning and its sorrows, in days past, shall yet chant choral thanks out of joyful hearts, and with purity before Thee round in all its circuits—O Lord, Thou that art to lead forth this world and give it such joy and voice of song, we beseech Thee that Thou

wilt make bare Thine arm, show Thy presence, and convince Thy people that Thou art at work, though hidden under forms of confusion. Though Thou soundest in revolutions as if it were the voice of men or of war, yet may we know how to behold Jehovah upon the storm, and see Thee controlling all the elements of misrule, and out of evil still educing good. Why is not the time at hand? Have not the nations drunk the wine of Thy wrath long enough? Is not the day of redemption and of victory come? We beseech Thee, cut short Thy delay and tarry not; come forth out of Thy pavilion, O Thou for whom the ages wait; and when the whole earth shall have been redeemed, whether we be here or whether we be with Thee in heaven, we will give the praise of our salvation and of its salvation, to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

CHURCH ADDITIONS.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

We thank Thee, our Father, that we are spared and brought hither to see each other in fellowship of joy, and that with gladness of heart we may look up and speak to Thee, Thou that art serene in love, Thou that art full of blessing. And we implore Thy benediction upon ourselves individually and upon this whole congregation; that Thou wilt make Thy mercies suitable to the wants of each one. Grant to us all that we may dwell together in heavenly places, indeed; and wilt Thou command that the light may shine forth from Thy word upon our heart. Drive such cares and intrusive troubles away as interfere with our worship; bless the meditations of our heart; inspire us to pray unto Thee in the sweetest communion of faith, and love; assist us when with gladness we sing together before Thee, and grant that all the services of the sanctuary, and the experience and service of our several homes may, through all the hours of the day, be blessed to us, for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

O Lord, our heavenly Father, Thou hast taught us not to live by the body, but by the soul. Thou hast taught us not alone to value the things which the body can see and which are the results of its senses, but hast opened to us from within the limit of invisible qualities, and taught us that there is a life within this substance

and material. Thou hast taught us of truth, of love, of faith, and of a communicable joy of God. Thou hast stretched out the lines and boundary of time, and interpreted to us the immortal life of the blessed. Thou hast caused all the sweet sights of heaven, and all the choirs of its joy-making saints, to come before us in solemn vision. Thou hast held those things, not at every day and hour to our sight, lest we should forget the duties that belong to us here, and yet, at times, they have come through the ear to discouraged hearts. Thou hast revealed to us invisible things, things unknown to mortal sense, so as to be more substantial than the things which the senses could recognize. We thank Thee that now we have abiding faith in Thee, and everlasting companionship. Nor is this a feeble thought or a poem of the imagination, though Thou hast sanctified our imaginations to apprehend these things. Blessed be Thy name, that Thou hast caused a thought of God, present with His people, to grow more and more plain and familiar, and more and more real and glorious to us; and with a ripened understanding, with liberty of conscience, and with largeness of moral being, we have lost nothing of the sense of Thy presence, but gained rather, and we stand confirmed, rooted and grounded in Christ Jesus, as ever present with His people.

We thank Thee that Thou art making Thy divine pity to appear to men, that one and another are continually being gathered by the hand of God from out of the midst of worldy influences. We thank Thee this morning that Thou hast permitted so many to stand up in the midst of their brethern, not to testify how good they are, but how good God is to their souls—not to testify that they have attained to saintship, but to bear witness that they, like us, have found the sin-sickness of their souls,

and have found also the great physician; and that they now bear gratefully His name upon them, and desire to be recognized by their fellow-men as disciples of Christ Jesus in the beginning of their Christian experience. And in the continuance of their experience, in those that are of a long time hoping in Thee secretly, we beseech Thee that they may have Thy divine guardianship and blessing. Teach them what things are right and true and good; what things to be desired and what rejected; what things to be prayed for and what to be left submissively to Thy providence.

O Lord, so guide them that they may never stand as low as now. May their hearts ascend; give them never so little light as now; fulfil to them the declaration that the path of the just is as the light that shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. And may the prayers and cheerful sympathies of Thy servants here surround them. How great a company is there before Thee of witnesses? How many hearts bear witness this morning? Are there not many that can be carried back by this occasion to that joyful day when they, too, were publicly affianced unto God.

Thou hast made us to be—all of us—a part of that great company which are rejoicing night and day before Thee in heaven. We are yet held thitherward by the restraints of these mortal bodies, but not long. Nor are we really divided; we are of them of whom the whole family is named, some in heaven and some upon earth. Thou art making the commerce rapid; Thou art sending tents thitherward not a few continually; and blessed be Thy name, Thou hast declared to us that Thy ministering spirits already minister to the heirs of salvation likewise, and the one broad wing of divine protection and care is spread over all in heaven and upon earth, and we rest in

the bosom of Thy love. Thou that dwellest in the infinite realm, Thou whose nature dost transcend all power of our conception, we adore Thee as the Universal Father, the everlasting God, the blessed rewarder of all those that by faith and patience are brought home.

We beseech Thee, if there are any this morning that have at all lost the gift of vision, the sense of love, upon whose hearts no longer are played the melodies of heaven, O Lord grant that their harps may be strung again. Lift them up from out of the dust, and bring them back from their decline and indifference; blow away all those chilling winds and those mists that hide their vision. If there are any of them that have been called to walk in slippery places, and even have fallen, have mercy upon them; may they be penitent for their transgressions, and know how, though they bewail their sin, to have hope in the sparing mercy of Jesus Christ. And we beseech Thee that none may make themselves castaways because they have stumbled and because they have done wrong; let none count themselves unworthy of eternal life; bring them back, Thou Shepherd of the flock, that goeth out to seek and to save the lost. Oh, do thine office work in our midst in behalf of any that are in peril, for they are Thine and bear Thy name and have been loved by Thee and borne through many years: and now be not weary, we beseech Thee, of Thy work, nor cast them forth, though they count themselves unworthy. Do not forget them as they forget Thee.

Are there any in circumstances of trouble and affliction that need the sunshine of heaven and the presence of God to strengthen and comfort them? Oh, be pleased, according to all Thy mercies, according to that great and wondrous disposition of sympathy and love which Thou hast, be pleased to draw near to such and succour them,

that they may not feel that Thou art a God afar off, but a being to help in time of need, that they may turn to other men that are like them and proclaim what God hath done for them. Glorify Thy name in such. Are there those in Thy presence this morning that come with arguments of thanksgiving and with lessons of praise? Be pleased, O God, to hear that which they now offer up, though silent. Thoughts speak louder in the ear of God than men's words can speak; the heart is heard throughout the universe, and all yearnings, and all desires of truth and of love within, speak forth evermore into the ear of God. We beseech Thee that Thou wilt accept our thanks, our gratitude, our love, our desire of obedience, and our offerings of repentance for past misconduct. We commit ourselves to Thine hand, O Lord God of our salvation, praying that Thou wouldst do exceedingly abundantly more for us than we ask or think.

Remember the young that are in our presence. Bless the parents that are endeavouring to rear up a generation to fear and serve God. Bless those that are as teachers who are endeavouring to co-operate with parents in the religious instruction of their children. Bless, we beseech Thee, those that are coming forth out of infancy into youth, may they not be imperilled in virtue; and those that are emerging from youth into manhood, we pray that they may not be tempted more than they can bear, but may they walk from youth to manhood with honour unclouded, consecrating the morning of life to virtue and religion; may more of such dwell under our roofs, may peace abide in our households, and may there be more and more coming from the altar of the family to the altar of the church, to bear public witness to the fidelity of the teaching of their parents. Bless us in the

further work, labour, and joy of the sanctuary ; and prepare us for all its sweet and solemn services ; be with us while we live, and grant that thus we may be with Thee in eternal life, and we will give the praise to Father, Son, and Spirit. **Amen.**

SACRAMENTAL SEASON.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

We rejoice that Thou hast caused the sun to know its day, and bound, and duty to shine. Thou that art the Sun of Righteousness, more glorious and more faithful, and fuller of blessed truth, arise upon us with healing in Thy beams, chasing away the darkness of unbelief, the clouds of doubt and fear; and grant unto us that sweet light by which we may know how to go forth and find whatever thing is needful for us to-day in that spiritual realm. Open our eyes upon the wondrous truths of Thy word; grant that we may no longer be left to interpret the spiritual by carnal reasonings. Give us that breathing and inspiration, that presence and brooding influence of Thine own self, that shall lead us by spiritual teaching into spiritual truths. Accept the offering of worship; accept the song of fellowship and praise; accept all our devout meditations; all our aspirations both excite and guide; and grant that everything this day may be seemly before Thee and profitable to us; and so glorify the name of our Saviour. We ask it in that blessed name. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

We draw near to Thee, Thou that art eternal and unsearchable, taking hold of Jesus our Saviour, and learning how to understand Thee by understanding him.

We adore Thee in all that we understand. Thy greatness is unsearchable, but all is not unsought and unsearched that is in Thee; and Thou hast shown towards us in Thy dealings, and thou hast explained by Thy words enough for our souls' admiration and love—enough to overwhelm us with wonder when we behold Thy power, and see the greatness of Thy being. Not that we can take it in, but in so far as we can trace it and see how like an ocean it leaves its shores and goes off endlessly beyond all voyaging of thought, we are amazed—we are baffled—we sink into insignificance before Thee.

We marvel that Thou shouldst take note of such as we are; we are as but worms before Thee—as motes of the very dust. And this is the beginning of our wonder, when Thou dost lift Thyself up in all the majesty and grandeur of Thy being to interpret to us that it is Thy nature—that which makes thee God and not man; that Thou dost concern Thyself in the least things and in the poorest, and in that which is furthest away from Thee and most needy; that Thou art a nursing God; that Thou art an everlasting Father; that Thou dost not outgrow, nor permit us to outgrow this tender relationship between the infinite supplies of divine superiority and the infinite needs of our inferiority; and we stand, not because we are made to stand alone, but because we are made to stand in God; and we live till this time, not because we have found out a way of independence safe and secure, but because by the leading of Thine own hand we have been brought safely through every danger to this state of blessedness which we feel to-day.

How good and how pleasant it is to come together this morning! Not so bright in the sky is the sun that

shines to-day, travelling in the greatness of his strength, and filling all the wide firmament with his gladness as is our joy, and our brightness, and our gladness, coming into fellowship to-day in this place. Thou hast taught us to love each other, yea, even without name and without personal knowledge; Thou hast taught our hearts to go forth and to greet every living thing that like us suffers, or loves, or yearns, or aspires; that needs and seeks in God, that finds and loves the hand that fulfils its necessities. And Thou hast brought us in this enclasping love together to-day. We look upon each other with strange surprise. What treasure have we in each other's hearts! What gladness and depth of joy! These are estates indeed for which we wait; but death shall give them to us.

We that here walk in tears, we that walk in manifold imperfections together, we that sing both hoarsely and discordantly, we are heirs of a common glorification—we are making haste, casting our burdens and our faults, outliving our vain desires, and reaching up with a divine impulse. We are going to that crowd of common meeting, where we shall be in the image of God, and harmonize with each other by the perfect purities of love. We anticipate it, we believe in it, we desire to feel already the ground-swell of the eternal world lifting us up. We desire to feel that this is not a vain and fantastic thing—that by the blood of Christ Jesus we are united together.

May we evermore weep with those that weep, and bear them up in their sorrow, and rejoice with those that rejoice, delivering ourselves and themselves from narrow selfishness of joy. May we live together; and may we strive to cast all that is good, as so many brands in the fire, and may the common light and common

warmth thereof be our heritage of joy together; and may we learn to feel that everything that stands solitary in our own individual experience, is of so much power to another; and that all things, even the most secret and sacred, when God shall bring them out of privacy into the large union and fellowship of final love, shall be made richer and more glorious. And may we search out this truth, even in this life by the light of Thy Spirit, the mystic love of Christ, and his union to his people, and their union to each other.

And we beseech Thee, as we sit to-day and sing together, that not our voices alone may mingle and go up in torrent of song; but, oh! may our hearts find each other—may we feel a unity of zeal and gladness.

And now may we be enkindled to pray for others, and not for ever selfishly for ourselves, and may we learn to take into our sympathies largely the wants of others. May we feel for them, and think for them, and yearn for them, and live for them. Teach us at last the beginning of divine love, to use ourselves not for ourselves, but for others. Teach us to find a coming back from that which we have given to others of joy, or purity, or goodness of any kind. And we beseech Thee that we may more and more interpret the spirit of Christ—the meaning of His life, the meaning of His death, and the meaning of His everlasting life in heaven.

O our Father, we are not only Thy children, but we are very young children. We mark and know our immaturity by our own inexperience—by our want of those qualities that should mark those that are joined to Thee. Be pleased, our Father, to bless us, taking Thy measure of benefaction not from our want, still less from any desire of persuasion of ourselves, but taking it from Thine own nature, from the royalty of Thy love, from the

wonderfulness of Thy generosity, and bless us in such a way as God loves to bless. Oh, how rich are we that stand in the grace of God, not in our own work or attainment, nor any measure of our own desert. This is what we delight in—this is that which we daily rejoice in, that we do not receive things for our own sake, but all for the sweet sake of Christ. We rejoice in Him that so perfumes our life, that so gives value to the meanest things, that leaves the savour of a heavenly name and spirit upon things that otherwise would seem dry and insipid to us.

Now, what motives are lacking in our condition, we find descending from Thee that art high above all earthly things. What time denies us, Thou givest; what our relationships do not afford, this all comprehending relationship with Thee yieldeth. Thou art the harvest-field in which we sow and in which we reap; Thou art the tower into which we run; Thou art our sun by day and our star by night, that bright and rising star of morning hope; Thou art bread and water to us; Thou art staff and stay, Thou art medicine and food; Thou art guidance; Thou art championship; Thou art teacher; Thou art friend, brother; Thou art sister, father and mother—all things to all men, and all in all. Our being is comprehended in Thine; in Thee we live, and move, and have our being; blessed be the name of the Lord.

And now we beseech Thee, O our Father, give us today in one gift all gifts, the consciousness of Thine own presence; the sense that Thou art thinking of us, and the preciousness of Thy thoughts, Thine individual presence to us according to our own individual wants; and may we, long before we are permitted to touch the sacred symbols that are before us in everlasting consecration—may we begin to commune with Thee, and to

take of Thy life, to take of Thee, by thought and faith and affection. Thus may we live to-day and to-morrow and each day and every year, until at last, the last year shall come, which, borne as a chariot, shall carry us speedily to our home in heaven; and there, when we behold Thee, not all the estate of Thy glory nor the surrounding of innumerable spirits, shall separate us or daunt us for one single moment; but we will cast our crown at Thy feet and give to Thy adorable name, Father, Son, and Spirit, the praise of our salvation. Amen.

UNION WITH CHRIST.

Evening Prayer.

AFTER COMMUNION.

We draw near to Thee, O our Redeemer, who dost move in the living way of love—Thou who hast made Thyself to be the gate. Thy heart opens even to us, and through that we walk unabashed before God. We rejoice we know something now of what is wrapped up in those words, that name, God; the glory, the joy, the purity, the depth, the power of love; its power for happiness, for restoration, for life-giving confidence. All that we need is in Thee; all that makes our life flows from Thee; in Thee we live and move and have our being, and we desire in the full appreciation and confidence of this truth to walk for evermore as the children of God.

We are not, O Lawgiver, Thy slaves; we are no longer the servants of sin; we are by adoption Christ's freemen; we are His brethren; we are heirs together with Him, and stand before God even as Christ stands, for ever beloved. And now we beseech Thee that this may not be written in the book, and consulted by reading at times, but may this be written in the fleshly table of our

heart. Grant that this sense of our connection with the eternal world, especially of our connection so endearing with Jesus Christ—grant that this divine union may be ever present with us; may we be sustained by it, converted, inspired, cured.

We ourselves are nothing. If thou wert to mark our nature and take account of our attainments, there is nothing to be said. It is folly even to look at us with any thought of excellence. Our hope is in Thee. It is to be in God, to take up the rudiments of being, and revolving them in the midst of Thine own nature and power, to bring forth final excellence out of such rude beginnings. O Lord our God, we beseech Thee that we may not for a moment endeavour to stand and find rest in any consciousness of our own excellence. May we make haste to own to ourselves the overwhelming imperfections of our life, and yet may we see how all our powers are inchoate; may we see how all the beginnings of our actions are rude and imperfect; may we see how far short we come in every point from the fulness of the divine intent in that respect, and how our whole character stands and must stand to the very end incomplete before Thee.

May we, therefore, know from henceforth the divine lesson of Thy love, Thy goodness, Thy compassion, and mercy, as the counterpart of our significant imperfection and sinfulness. May all our hope be in God; may we cease the folly of lingering and looking elsewhere; at last, may we forget self and think of God. May we look away from all our consciousness, from our various endeavours, and from fretful resolutions that vex and torment us, from the whole round and fever of our inward life; may we look away from all that is mean and little and insufficient in ourselves, upon which we

have so long brooded, and from which we have tried to extract some comfort; and behold the glory of God, that fills the heavens and that overspreads the earth, and in Thee, by joy, by admiration, by trust, by love, may we begin to find some heart-rest, and may we take our consolation not in what we are, but in what we behold. May we look up into the face of Jesus Christ, and since He chooses to call Himself ours, may we not thwart the divine enunciation nor in any way withstand the blessed faith by unbelief, but rejoice with exceeding great joy that this is the nature of God, to take up such as we are, to love them, to bear them, to carry them forward with everlasting strength, until at length they shall be purified and established in heaven.

O Lord, restore to any that have lost it, the savour of this blessed view of Christ; give the clearness and the fulness of it to those that see it but in part and lingeringly; and reveal Thyself to those that never beheld Thee thus clothed with glory, and standing for them. May every one of us desire to be clothed with Thy righteousness, not with our own; and may we stand in Thy love. May we have this faith that works by love and supersedes all other influences, and is mightier than all others. And so we beseech Thee that we may go on from day to day, till the trial is ended, and life closes here, to begin there in full vision and fruition. Wilt Thou hear our petitions, not because we are worthy to speak unto Thee, but for Thine own name's sake? And to the Father, Son, and Spirit, shall be praise everlasting. Amen.

BAPTISMAL SERVICE.

Sabbath Morning.

We rejoice, our heavenly Father, when we behold the faces of these dear children—for they are as doors to Thee, and through them we enter heaven and have some conception of Thy fatherhood. Thou that dwellest in eternity, that spannest the heavens with Thine hand, and layest the foundations of the earth, that callest all the stars by name and givest them their appointed circuit, and sittest serene in the immensity of universal affairs, art God over all blessed for ever; and yet, such is Thy nature that Thou art delighted with these little ones, and art saying, "Suffer them to come unto Me, and forbid them not."

In this announcement from the skies we see the sweetness and the tenderness of Thy loving nature to cheer and to encourage us. Surely Thou art to be the soul's delight, when, set free from the obstructions of this mortal life, leaving the shell and the nest behind, we stretch our wings and fly up unto Thee and see Thee as Thou art. Not through the interpretation of laws, nor of nature, nor of man, but as Thou art we shall behold Thee. We shall joy and rejoice in Thee for evermore, and all the soul shall be happy; every thought and

feeling and purpose shall be filled and overflowing with Thy divine excellence. We rejoice that Thou hast a home appointed for Thine own, now dispersed, apparently wind-blown and storm-beaten up and down through all the ways of life. Thou art gathering them, Thou art sending forth death as a nurse to collect and bring Thy children home through sleep to Thee, and they shall all be housed and stored where there is no more storm or trouble for evermore. As when our children are sick, we patiently and eagerly care for them, so dost Thou care for us: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." As we make haste to every cry of want, so dost Thou; Thine ear is ever open; Thou hearest us when we cry, to relieve and to bless.

We rejoice, O God, in Thy paternity; we do not undertake to explore its bounds nor to know its intimate workings; it is enough for us that Thou art disclosed as a Father, infinite in love, perfect in justice, everlasting and immutable in truth — holy, just, and good. We trust Thee; we adore Thee in all those inapproachable elements, in all those attributes which dawn upon our sight, but run away in their proportions beyond the region of thought.

In all those things that evermore make Thee mighty and infinite as God, we adore Thee; but rising in the stature of our minds, as fast as we come to a better knowledge, as fast as we bring in elements to our own comprehension, we change adoration into love: and so we adore Thee for the vast and unrivalled extent of grandeur which plays upon the imagination and fills the whole soul with awe and fear and reverence; but all the disclosures that Thou hast made, the words that Thou hast spoken, and the puttings forth of Thy nature on every

side—these draw us to Thee in the sweetest bonds. We confide in Thee; we lean upon Thee; we rest our souls in Thee. Whom have we in heaven but Thee; who is there upon earth that we can desire besides Thee or in comparison with Thee? Thou art great in heaven; Thou art great upon the earth; Thou dost not stand in Thy greatness upon the recognition of any. Though all men forget Thee, though all men should bow down to idols, still Thou art God over all, filling immensity, great beyond all thought or conception or bounds.

Now, O Lord, we beseech Thee that we may not alone have in the fervour of devotion these reverent and loving thoughts, but grant that we may be able to walk with Thee evermore in all our affairs and be undisturbed; that we may not be vexed by the harassing of care and trouble in our own hearts; that we may not be disturbed in our social relations, in the ten thousand collisions and threats of feverish life; that we may not be alarmed in the mutations of outward affairs, nor cast up and down. Grant that we may not be as ships, ever changing with the winds and waves of the sea, but rather may we be as the cedars of Lebanon, that stand from generation to generation unmoved and unmovable.

Grant that our confidence may be in God and not in man, nor in ourselves. We bring to Thee all our affairs; we are willing to be under Thee the conductors of them; we are willing to be Thy stewards; we are willing to labour, to bear, and to suffer unto the end. We will endure whatever in Thy providence is brought upon us, but we desire to feel that there is a thought wider and clearer than our wisest thought—a purpose that overrules the purposes of men—a Providence that includes in it greater good for us than we can plan for ourselves. Whatever may seem to be the courses of things, Thou

art guiding the earth, and Thou art guiding the nations of the earth, and Thou wilt bring all things to pass that shall establish peace upon justice, and universal liberty upon equity, and all nations shall see the salvation of God.

And now, Lord, we commend to Thee these dear children that have been brought and offered up in consecration. Deliver these parents from superstitious reliance upon outward form that is but significant of an inward consecration. May the purpose of their heart, which they have formed to-day, abide with them and be as a rudder in the household, a discipline, an education, an example, a care. May we accept, also, the charge as brethren in one household of faith which is brought to us; may we sympathize with each other in the family, and in the care and trouble of rearing our children.

We pray that Thou wilt remember all that have brought their children in days past—all that have brought them before Thee in the sanctuary and the closet, anywhere in the faith of Christ have humbly attempted to educate their children to Thee. We beseech Thee that Thou wilt bless their children; may they grow up in purity, and, if tempted, be able to resist temptation; may they be able to break through every snare, and go forth from Christian youth to Christian manhood. Help parents that are tried, whose patience is tried, who are in distress of heart respecting their household, in anywise whatsoever; may they find that neglecting faith is cause of more trouble, and may they be able to cast their care upon the Lord, who careth for them.

Thou, Everlasting Strength, hast set Thyself forth to bear our burdens. May we bear Thy cross, and bearing that, find there is nothing else to bear; and touching that cross, find that instead of taking away our

strength, it adds thereto. Give us faith for darkness, for trouble, for sorrow, for bereavement, for disappointment; give us a faith that will abide though the earth itself should pass away—a faith for living, a faith for dying.

Grant, we beseech of Thee, O Lord God, that when we shall have passed through these years of uninterpreted sorrows and cares, and gone through all the instrumentalities by which Thou art in Thy school educating us, and we have come to the end, the appointed bound, oh grant that then we may not be afraid to venture further; may we find ourselves mightily lifted up by the Spirit, borne upward to Thy very presence; and standing in Zion and before God, may we be satisfied and undisappointed and unterrified; may we stand to behold Him whom our souls delight in, and to whom we have feebly cried; may we behold Thee in Thy glory and find ourselves welcomed there, saved with an everlasting salvation. And to Thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit, evermore. Amen.

GROWTH IN GRACE.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

Our Father! we are Thy children, come home this morning to the place of invitation, the place made sacred by the fulfilment of Thy promises ten thousand times to us. Thou hast made our wants to grow, that Thou mayest have the privilege every day of supplying them, and that we might be brought into the sweetest connection with Thee, by taking, day by day, our daily bread from Thine hand. We come to-day, then, to take what Thou shalt give us; and as Thou art our bread and the water of life, the life, the breath, the all in all, grant us Thyself and we are supplied. Help us to read Thy word, to sing Thy praises, to commune with Thee in prayer, to speak and to hear from Thee. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

We thank Thee, that we are again brought to the house of prayer; and that we are permitted, our Father, to make known our wants, not because Thou needest to be told; Thou knowest before we want what we shall need; and our own uneasiness, that does not yet even interpret what the trouble is, is well understood by Thee, before whom the thoughts and the intents of the heart are ever open. But Thou hast made it to be pleasant and to be profitable to us to ask, and consciously

to receive in asking, the things which we need. Thou hast made us to be like Thee not only, but to be Thy children; and all the offices of duty are made to bring us around about Thee, and into personal intercourse with Thee; and we rejoice in Thee, every one. We would not pluck our blessings from Thee as men pluck fruit from trees which they never planted. We desire so to receive our mercies, as that from every taking, we shall think of Thee, and feel warmth and gratitude to Thee; for all the things that do now attend upon our perverted natures are making us earthly, and are sending us aside to the Creation instead of to the Creator.

And we desire evermore to be made so conscious of our dependence upon Thee, and of the endearing and ennobling relations that there are between us, that we shall be turned towards Thee by the things that are made and which we use day by day. We have become selfish; we have perverted our best powers; we have not given to ourselves that growth which belongs to our nature. We have pursued the things in life which Thou hast forbidden; we have left neglected and unsearched the things which Thou hast commanded; and Thou beholdest us altogether sinful, and stained in every part.

We need forgiveness; we need divine forbearance; we need a new creation; we need to be inspired by the energy of Thy mind, that never faints, and never is weary. Blessed be Thy name that Thou art our watch, our guide; Thou art our Captain in the hour of conflict. Thou, who art in the night the bright and morning star, and in the day the Sun of righteousness; Thou art to us the shadow of a rock in a weary land—our tower, into which we run when pursued; our Saviour, our pavilion, where we can hide until the storm be overpast. What is there that we can know of grace, of purity, of com-

fort, or strength in things of earth, that Thou hast not selected them and called them by their name; so that we can neither by day nor by night touch anything that is made of Thee, that it hath not some message impressed upon it from Thee to us? All things are speaking to us of God, if we were not deaf and would not hear. We pray, O Lord, that Thou wilt grant that the experience, little though it be, of our love and joy in Thee in time past, may not fade out, but rather augment; grant, we beseech of Thee, that the things which aforetime have held us away from Thee, may now lead us more closely to Thee.

We thank Thee for our blessings. Often we have perverted them: the gift was good, except in the using; and now we pray that Thou wilt send us the blessings that we need, and with them Thy grace, by which we shall be able to employ them aright. May we be enabled to develope ourselves by all the benefactions of Thy providence; may we not grow selfish by prosperity, nor hard by reason of power and influence. May we not grow conceited, because Thy light shines in our path to teach us where to go. When we are strengthened of God, may we not feel that we are independent of Thee; may we rejoice in all our affections, and may we not make idols of the things which we love. May we learn to love all our friends, and to hold all our friendships in the light of the eternal world;—our children, our brothers and our sisters, our companions and friends of every name, may they not be as roots that hold on to this soil and earth, but rather as blossoms that always lie with bosom open to the light and the air of heaven.

And in the midst of these things, may we not only not be held down and back, but rather strengthened to rise up and to go forward. May we learn to bear

with one another, each his brother's burden; may we labour to alleviate each other's cares; may we seek to live not selfishly, but grant that we may take hold the one of another's hand, remembering that we are members one of another, and so may the law of love be more and more exemplified in our disposition and in our outward life.

May we desire to be pure. May we desire to be benevolent; may our yearnings be for these things. May we not leave it to the coercion of daily duty, but may our yearnings be for that life in our souls that is in Thine. Thou art love; and whilst upon earth, Blessed Jesus, Thou didst go about doing good, and unto the end: may that example quicken and strengthen and comfort us.

We pray that Thou wilt bless those that are gathered together, according to their several wants. Thou knowest every one; all the secret temptation, the secret sorrow, the secret weakness, the perplexity, the darkness of mind, the foreboding sadness, the remembered grief, the anticipated trouble—all things are naked and open before Thee with whom we have to do; and as Thou causest the clouds to rain down of Thy abundance, so that all the myriads of things that need the showers do receive their portion in due season, so grant, we beseech Thee, that Thy blessings may come down to this congregation, and every one may find that God is thinking of him. May every one feel to-day that some heavenly influence hath met and blessed him.

Be with all those that are separated from us, but who belong to us, wherever they may be. If sickness detains them, or journeying, or residence afar off, or whatever other separation or hindrance, still may we to-day feel that we are united to Christ; and as we rise in sacred

song, in the fellowship of love and worship, or in communings and meditations, by as much as we come near to Thee, may we feel that we are coming near to those that are dear to us, and so evermore on earth may we have premonitions of that blessedness which awaits us in heaven, where we shall all be united one to another, because to Thee. On earth may it begin, so that dispersions and separations shall have no power to make voids between us, but unite us by faith in Christ even to those that are His disciples here upon earth. Glorify Thyself in the truth; glorify Thyself, we beseech Thee, in this land by the events that are transpiring. Wilt Thou advance the cause of justice and of truth; may the whole world receive Thy blessing, which hath so long been delayed; at last, oh grant that the glory of the Lord may shine over all the world, and the daylight of heaven come; and to Thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

FOR A HIGHER LIFE.

AN EVENING PRAYER.

We rejoice, O Lord our God, that Thou art great, and needest not that any one should draw near to augment Thy glory; yet by reason of Thine heart, Thou dost need even us, and Thou dost bend towards us even as a father towards his children. We rejoice that Thy greatness doth not separate Thee from Thy creatures. We rejoice that perfect purity, which we know nothing of in this life, is revealed to us in Thee; not as hating and despising the impure, but as full of pity and full of mercy, and full of patient forbearance and full of all curative comfort. And we rejoice that such is Thy nature, and that Thou art royal in Thy mercies. Thou art God over all, blessed for ever, because Thou art good unto all, and for ever blessing.

And now we desire to unite the acclamation of our voice, and the consent of our heart, and the full strength of our desire, to those that praise Thee in heaven. We give ascriptions of praise to Thee; we glory in Thy majesty, and in the grandeur of Thy being. We rejoice in Thy supremacy, and that we are beneath Thy sway. We rejoice in Thy goodness, and while we adore Thee, we love Thee more; and we desire, O Lord our God, though with faintness of spirit and with weakness of light in the

midst of temptations, in the midst of darkness and ignorance, with ten thousand wavering steps, and mistakes innumerable, yet we desire to follow Thee. Whatever waves roll over us, whatever streams drive us out of our path, whatever befalls us, we come again to this one desire of life; that we may follow after Thee, and be conformed to Thine image, and become Thy children indeed, and have an evidence that we are to have the inheritance of the saints in glory.

And further we desire, O Lord our God! that Thou wilt strengthen all that is good within us, and teach us how to put it forth. Help us to restrain whatever is evil, to bind it for Christ's sake and by the power of God, through Christ Jesus given unto us. We pray that God will grant unto us that the fountain of all goodness and divine love may be in us. May we have those secret beginnings of grace; may we learn how to chastise selfishness, how to humble pride, how to restrain every wayward and vicious inclination that offends against the purity of our souls or the peace of our fellow-men.

And may we not take counsel of the world; may we not listen to its suggestions, nor measure what is right by its customs alone. May we not feel that that is obedience enough to Thee which fulfils the measure of obedience required by human laws and usages; but may we, as disciples of Christ, be for ever growing to something higher; to something nobler in justice, truer in veracity, greater in honour, purer in life than that which is required by men. And so may our life be above life; so may our path, though it be straight and narrow, tend speedily above all the lower ways of time.

Oh, strengthen us against temptation; against those temptations that are peculiar to each of us. Thou knowest where the adversary most easily forces our

defences; be gracious to every one in those respects in which they need divine help. May those that are captives be set free; those that are discouraged in their warfare with evil, be empowered of God; and may all of us be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

We pray that we may be inspired to nobleness of life in the least things. May we dignify all our daily life. May we set such a sacredness upon every part of our life, as means appointed for the glorious ends of our edification, that nothing shall be trivial, nothing unimportant, and nothing dull, in all the daily round of life.

Oh, may we have Thy presence so long as we live. Abandon us not when old age shall come. Whatever changes may intervene or then may come upon us, wherever we may be, in sickness, and when weakness begins to take hold upon the strength of death, O Lord Jesus, abandon us not in the trying hour, in that grand passage, and in that beginning of immortality which lies before us all. May we not only have faith in Christ Jesus, but the presence of Christ consciously with us. May we be cheered in our weakness, may all our doubts as clouds be driven away, and may the bright smiling of Thy face be as a guiding star; and following Thee, may we wake in heaven, at rest and glorified for evermore. And to Thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

CHRIST OUR NECESSITY AND JOY.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

Thou hast opened Thy hand, O Lord our God, and the earth doth smile with the light of Thy countenance. Thy hands give forth substantial blessings, and Thy voice reaches even unto our souls; and we are blest in both. We beseech Thee, therefore, that we may recognize this morning that Thou art the source of all our good. May we be glad in Thy presence; and, coming into Thy temple, may we believe that here are peace and joy; here is love; here communion with God and rest for the weary soul. Wilt Thou, therefore, bless us in the exercises of our assembly? In every word of instruction which we shall endeavour to speak, in the reading of Thy word, in offering up petitions and prayers, in sacred song together, in our meditation, in everything that we shall do, may we have help and blessing. Go with us to our homes, and may there be Sabbath in the household as well as in the sanctuary—the rest which Thou givest unto Thy people. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

What are we, O Lord our God, that we should worship Thee? Thou dost not need our praises; Thou art surrounded in heaven by those of nobler stature, and Thou hast, dawning like the morning round about Thee, glorious ones that have kept their first estate; and Thou

hast in every part of Thy heavenly domain innumerable spirits of just men made perfect, and there Thou Thyself dost teach the everlasting choir, and joy is their music. They behold Thee, not with mortal eyes, nor through the veil of infirmity and passion, but as Thou art; and are perpetually drawn towards Thee, not alone by the voice of praise and by sympathies, for Thou art making them like unto Thee. They perform Thine offices; they go forth at Thy word, and going to the utmost bounds and domain of God, are still at home with Thee; for that is heaven where Thou art, and Thou art everywhere to those that love Thee.

We rejoice, O Lord Jesus, that Thou art praised in heaven and with heavenly perfection, and that therefore Thou dost not in this way need our praises; and yet Thou hast taught us that wonderful and blessed truth, that Thou dost need us; for Thou dost pray for us, that where Thou art we may be also. We can faintly interpret what Thou art by our own experience in this—for we know that it is not alone those that are our fit companions, that rise and stand by us, that we need, but that we have need often of the pity and love of those that are less than we, and that are far below us in moral stature; and we believe that thus, even in these faint experiences, we have some conception of the majesty, greatness, and grandeur, of that nature of God which leads Him to need us and to yearn for us. We see in this the mystery of divine love, which shall never by searching be found out—known more and more, more and more unfolding, never perfectly known and never exhausted—that wonderful love of Christ. O Lord our God, we thank Thee for the revelation of it. We thank Thee for the rest and the unspeakable comfort which we have in the thought of Thee.

If we turn to what we are, if we look to our achievements, if we measure even our hope and aspiration, there is but very little satisfaction, and soon worn out. There is not in all the weavings of our fancy, in all the turnings of our thoughts, or in our daily life, enough to gratify us. We need God. Thou hast infinite fulness, greatness, and glory. In Thee is all purity and goodness, all justice and truth; in Thee are all things that engage the heart, enwrap the imagination, and fire the soul with ecstasy. All are born with Thee and dwell with Thee; and Thou art in Thy heart sufficient for all the wants of all the hearts throughout the desolate universe. O Lord our God! when shall we rise to some conception of Thee above the things that Thou hast made? When shall we see in these things, but mere symbols and interpretations of Thy nature, until human life shall be an ever-written gospel; until nature itself shall be again the book of God to our eye, as once it was to the eyes of prophets and inspired men?

O Lord our God! Thou art teaching us through Thy written word, that we may know how to understand Thy created revelation. Grant, we beseech Thee, that we may know the beginning of all knowledge of God, by the implanted spirit of God in us. We pray that Thou wilt cleanse our souls from the darkness of nature; that Thou wilt brood upon us, and bring from chaos out of the furnace of creation all ordered things. If there are those in Thy presence that are wistfully looking towards the East, who long to see some light, O Lord Jesus! Thou bright and morning star, dawn upon them.

If there are others present that have seen Thee, that have known Thee in times past, but who have lost the sweetness of early experience, who have but fitful gleams and rejoicings, O Lord Jesus, rise upon them as a sun

of righteousness, with healing in Thy beams, and give them daylight, full, bright and serene. If there are those that look at themselves more than they look at God, and are bereft of joy and comfort, by reason of self-condemnation, doubt and apprehension, filled with conscious guilt, that Thou hast withdrawn; oh, sweetly charm their vision that they may forget to look at themselves, and that they may behold the unspeakable glory of Jesus Christ, which is a better vision. May they at last learn that their strength is in Christ and not in themselves, and that it is the righteousness, the boundless grace and goodness and love of Christ that is to save them, and not the longings of their own will and power. If there are found in Thy presence those that have had a faith of Thee and have lost it, and are wandering in darkness and trouble, who at times think it is a vain delusion, and are rushed upon by strong desires of something nobler and better than life's experiences, O Lord, let them not drift for ever thus out at sea without guidance, and subject to swelling storms. Go to them, Thou that walkest on the water, Thou that hast control of the elements, Thou that didst save Thy terrified ones. O Lord Jesus, go to any that are thus drifting further and further towards darkness.

If there are those that are in despondency, whose hope in Christ is as if Christ in the ship were asleep in the storm, rise Thyself, O storm-calming Christ, and calm their terror, and give them peace that they may praise Thee. Is not every heart a temple of God? Oh, how wonderful shall be the offering of every one who knows how now out of a grateful heart to speak forth Thy praise! What other thing can we ask? Disclose Thyself to every one—Thy love, Thy gentleness, Thy faithfulness, Thy fidelity that cannot be overcome; that

power that is more than life, more than death—that power that reigns in heaven and controls in hell. Disclose Thyself to every one, not as the God of judgment, though Thou wilt judge; not as a God of justice, though Thou art unspeakably holy; but so breathe consolation upon every clouded spirit that light and promise shall come to every heart that is mourning.

Begin the work of grace in those where it is not begun; carry it forward in all hearts where Thou hast begun it; and, O Lord, perfect it in those that have long sought Thee and have not perfectly found Thee; and may there be many among us upon whom shall begin to dawn that perfect peace, that peace which flows as a river, whose sources and fountains are not in any earthly thing, but in God. Be very near to those in Thy presence that need divine quickening and help; for Thou art so wonderful in Thy mercy, that Thou dost not alone help us in our greatest wants, but in least; for there is nothing that concerns us that does not concern Thee.

If there are any present troubled with affliction, Thou art here to answer their petition. If there are any that are grievously oppressed by poverty, and know not what to do, Thou, O God, art here to listen to their complaint and to send them succour. If there are any here who are weary with sickness, and troubled for want of sympathy, Thou art their God and dost love them, and they may come to Thee with all their trouble, for Thou wilt not cast out their complaint. If there are any that are straitened in business and burdened with social cares, here Thou wilt permit them to bring their secular affairs, not that they may turn them in their minds to make life more weary and care more vexatious, but here they may lay down their burden; here they may be sustained with a consciousness that they are leaning upon the staff of

God, and that all events are in His hand, and that all things shall work together for good.

If there are any that are mourning because Thou hast taken their children from them, Thou canst show them to them again. If there are those present from whom Thou hast taken friends and companions, Thou canst let them see them. Only the bodily form is gone; they are near to them, and Thou canst reveal how near the kingdom of God is to those that are on earth. If there are here those who are strangers in a strange place, oh, Thou canst make them understand this morning that they are of the household of faith, and that here is their Father's house and here are their brethren. If there are those that are in any way tried or have any need whatsoever, whether bodily or spiritually, whether of the affections or of the understanding, or of things domestic, Thou, O God, art here to-day to receive supplications from every one, and to show Thyself royal in mercy and wonderful in wisdom, and patient beyond all earthly degrees of patience.

We pray that we may not offend Thee by unbelief; may we come, every one of us, knowing that there is nothing more pleasing to God than that we should trust His goodness, and that we should presume upon His mercy;—that we should come boldly to the throne of grace and obtain grace in time of need. And if those present gain nothing else, may every one of us go away feeling that we have been nearer to God, with a greater certainty of His presence overshadowing us; and so may we feel more of the Spirit of God carried with us.

Be Thou near to those that are sick and cannot come hither, and wilt Thou grant that the light of God may fill their dwelling. Chase away their trouble, their doubts, and their unbelief, and give them sweet peace in

believing in Christ. May those that are appointed to life again come forth in due season, chastened by sickness, and made better. May those that are appointed to life eternal, issue forth out of the gate of promise and hope, and appear in Zion and before God.

We pray for the outcast, for those that have given themselves over to work iniquity—for the children of vice and crime; for those that have had no instruction in better things, unto whom the gate of heaven has been shut! father and mother both teaching the ways of vice and crime—O God, have compassion on such. Remember those that sit in ignorance; remember all that are in oppression; all that are in any way the subjects of injustice and misrule. We pray that the whole family of man everywhere may come up in remembrance before Thee. O Lord God, how long, *how long* shall the earth carry its burden? How long shall the world be without even the knowledge of God? How long shall darkness and besotted ignorance and sin brood upon whole continents? How long shall war and oppression, and rapine and misrule, desolate the earth? When shall the realm of tears cease? When shall the voice of singing be heard in all the land? Thou hast promised better things. O God, send forth Thy summer in which this world shall ripen, and then pluck the fruit, that Thou mayest glorify Thyself with it through the ages of eternity; and to Thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

PETITIONING FOR LIGHT.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

We thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou hast already begun to do us good, even in Thy sanctuary; and hast lifted up the light of Thy countenance upon us. Now, our Father, we ask that Thou wilt fulfil Thy purposes. Breathe that divine and quickening influence upon us under which all our powers shall rise up and do their office-work. Grant us all needed help in the reading of Thy word, that we may not walk through it as though it were the grave of truths, but that we may behold them rising in power, touched of God; and that we may hear them speaking to us. Help us to lift up our voice in prayer, and to have sweet communion with Thee; and help us also to commune with Thee in fellowship with each other in sacred song. May we rejoice thus to mingle our voices one with another, and go before the throne of a common Father. Bless us in speaking from Thy truth, in meditating upon the word spoken, and in all the exercises of public worship and of private devotion, this day. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

Our Heavenly Father, we come this morning to ask that Thou wilt give us the spirit of little children, that we may be able to throw off that pride and that vanity which have grown up under the influences of this world,

and which have not enlightened but blinded us, making us think that we were living when we were dead. We pray that we may be able to look upon ourselves, not in the light of other men's opinions, nor according to our own low merit as judged in the light of affection and of household and of human affairs. May we behold ourselves beneath the light of Thy law and under the light of Thy countenance. May we see our littleness, our crude moral state, our scanty attainments, the mixture of motives that perpetually play upon the surface of our life; and may we behold the deeper and darker currents that work beneath. May we behold how we grow out from the earth; how we are inclined to the things that savour not of God, but of man; and how we ofttimes live under influences that are bearing us downward and fastening us to the earth, rather than inspiring and lifting us toward God.

We pray, ay, we entreat, that we may have such a sense of our sins, that we shall be glad to be instructed by every word of Thine. May we have such a sense of our wickedness, that it shall come with inconceivable joy to us that God is our everlasting strength. May we be so far weaned from our own vain-glorious self-dependence, that we shall be willing to trust in Christ and to take hold by faith and live upon Him. We beseech Thee, not that Thou wilt give us that help which we need to do the things that are of the body and of the earth:—for that we have power; but to do the things that lift us from the earth and towards the spiritual and the invisible;—for that we need instruction. And we come to pray that Thou wilt crown all Thy daily gifts and Thine other innumerable mercies, with that sweetest and most blessed gift, the Holy Spirit, so that every one of us may feel that the flame which lights our path is

divine, that we are walking in no uncertain way, that we are not left alone to the suggestions of our imagination, nor to follow the imperfect directions of our own reason, but that we are guided of God, who loves us and has comprehended us in the arms of His promises; who has adopted us into the household of His own children, and made us heirs of eternal riches that are yet to be revealed in us.

Now, we ask, O God, if there are those in Thy presence who are rejoicing before Thee, who have learned that Thou art gracious, who know of a surety that there is a life hidden with Christ, more blessed and joyful than any disclosed life of earthly pleasure or success, if to-day they offer up their tribute of thanksgiving and of gratitude, be pleased to accept it at their hands; and if they have found access to Thee and can prevail in prayer, may they not forget those round about them that are struggling as once they were. May their prayers to-day go forth for all their Christian brethren, for their more perfect emancipation, and for a more perfect disclosure of the power of Christ in their souls.

Hear their cry who sometimes love Thee, but whose hopes are often clouded; who know that the true way of life is that which leads towards the Saviour, but who lose that way. O Lord, we beseech of Thee that Thou wilt draw near to such; and we pray not that Thou wilt take conscience away from them, but magnify its office in them; and add to it a faith that shall discern, a trust that shall rest in Christ, and a love that shall be able to find Him wherever He is. May they grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

And if there are in Thy presence, those that are walking in the exact way, avoiding evil and seeking good, walking with duty as a perpetual burden and ache, O

Lord God, fulfil to them the promise Thou hast made—and may they find that their religion, which is of duty, being touched of Christ, and illumined by faith—may they find that the yoke is easy and the burden light. There are many that cannot walk by reason of that burden which they bear, and whose life is one perpetual throe of trouble, and almost of despair; but Thou canst bring them forth, quickening all the power of doing right; Thou canst make sin seem to them yet more sinful, and evil more hateful; and yet Thou canst make the victory more easy, and their way of life more bright and joyful by the shining of Thine own self, shining into their souls and teaching them of God.

If there are any present desiring to know something of these things, but are like ignorant men that know not whither to go nor where to land, O Lord Jesus, Thou canst guide the lost, for Thou didst come to seek and to save the lost, and we commend to Thee to-day every heart that is in anywise touched with a desire to live a better life; may they not be content to live simply in external things better, but may they come boldly at once to the throne of grace, and begin to live a Christian life in faith and love. Bless those whom in Thy providence Thou hast put to guide the inquirer; may every one of Thy dear people, to whom Thou hast given some experience of divine things, feel that they are commissioned of Almighty God to be His ministering servants, and that they are to preach the Gospel by their joy, by their purity, and also by the word of mouth. May they feel that they are ordained to be ministers of Christ, and that they are both to instruct and guide those round about them, giving them wisdom and an appetite for these sacred things. May they rejoice in nothing else but Christ, and may great success be given

to Thy people. We thank Thee that Thou art manifesting Thyself a God of power; giving resurrection from the old life into the new, so that Thy churches are brought to rejoice in Thy goings forth. O Lord, we rejoice in the memory of past goodness, in Thy providential mercies, and in the belief that Thou art not far from us. We hear Thy footsteps here and there; we learn of the trophies of Thy victorious grace in one and another instance, and our souls are glad in Thee. Even so, make bare Thine arm in the midst of Thy people. Go forth, O God, not in judgment, but for salvation; and may there be many in all the churches throughout our land that shall be awakened to righteousness—many that shall be called from dead works and darkness into the marvellous light and liberty of the sons of God. Bless the truth that is to be spoken to-day; strengthen Thy servant to perform the duties that are allotted to him, and may a portion be distributed to every one, nor fail of its effect, and may this be a day of blessing among us. We ask these things, not that we are worthy, but because it pleases Thee to give. We ask them for Thine own name's sake; to whom, with the Spirit, shall be praise everlasting. Amen.

THE JOURNEY OF LIFE.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

Be pleased, our Father, to look forth from the fulness of Thin own glory, and communicate to us something of Thy life, which Thou hast for Thyself and for all Thy creatures. Grant that we may know Thy presence by the rising in us of that faith, that hope, and all those affections that go forth to greet Thee. And we ask that Thou wilt give us a comprehensive heart, that the words that we shall read from Thy sacred revelation shall come to us as the messages of God. Grant that we may feel the need of confession and worship, and that we may unite together, and be blessed in the union of prayer and in the communion of song: and may the word of instruction be given earnestly and received heedfully, and may all the worship which we offer, and the instruction which we seek, and the joy which we desire, and every experience and exercise of the sanctuary and of the whole Sabbath Day be blessed of Thee. We ask for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

We adore Thee, Thou that art the source of light—Thou that carriest life to all that are. Thou art great in power, unsearchable in wisdom, and infinite in all the resources of Thy being. We cannot by searching find Thee out or understand Thee to perfection; but what we know inspires in us reverence and love and joy. With

our hearts we prostrate ourselves before Thee, glad to know that we are of Thee and going to Thee; that our life is watched; that Thou seest the end from the beginning, and through endless diversities art drawing us each to our final estate of glory. Thou art the author and the finisher of our faith; and when things around about us are insecure, Thou art the tower of our strength. When all other things seem to fail, Thou never failest—the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, without variableness or shadow of turning.

We rejoice, O God, that Thou hast made such communications of Thy thoughts and feelings through Jesus Christ our Saviour. He is the bread of our life. We are strong in Thee, that are weak in ourselves; and are able to walk where but for the knowledge that Thou hast given us, we should crouch down under trouble. We are able to stand and have done all to stand against every assault in the midst of battle. In thick-coming dangers, both present and future, Thou hast taught us to sit securely, to sing, to rejoice in Thee; and in the midst of our adversaries to count it all joy when we fall into trials; to rejoice in weakness, in infirmities and afflictions for Christ's sake; to rejoice in persecutions, ay, to hail death itself, and to go gladly towards it as the gate of deliverance.

Thou hast taught us, O Lord God, to despise the things that are in this life, except as things to be used by the wayside; therein Thou hast taught us to abound in joy in the gifts of God, but Thou hast taught us to lay them down even as we took them up. As strangers and pilgrims our city of habitation is not here; the houses which we build are but for the hour; the city, whose builder and maker is God, shines everlastingly; and those mansions, not made with hands but eternal in the

heavens, are our home. Thitherward we flock in companies and in families—thither each is tending. And we rejoice that Thou art sending forth messages to us by the hour; that we are remembered, and that we are secured. We rejoice that Thou dost teach us to believe, that all the events which are every day environing us are watched of God, permitted or sent, and that all things work together for the good of them that love Thee.

Now, O Lord Jesus, we beseech Thee that we may be held up in this faith, and that we may bear it about even as our very raiment, to cover our nakedness. What are we when we stand in the flesh, and only in the things that this world can give? What are we when we are in the midst of the best estate of life, without the sunlight of Thy countenance? Thou dost by Thy grace give light to us; and though we are consumed and the outward man perishes, the inward man is renewed day by day. We desire that Thou wilt continue that work which Thou hast begun; that influence which Thou hast already breathed upon us, let it still work for us and in us.

Help us to watch against easily-besetting sins; to put away everything that separates between us and Thee, and limit and measure our expectations by the rule Thou hast given us—help us to set before us evermore the cross of Christ on earth and Christ Himself ever living in heaven, and from day to day may our treasures be there and our hearts be there also. May we set our affections upon things above, where Christ sitteth. And grant, we pray Thee, as Thou art making that land both nearer to us by every year that we live, and clearer to us by all those that Thou art taking from us and to whom we stretch our vision—grant that it may become more

influential upon us; that we may live by faith of the invisible more, and by the power of the senses less.

Grant this morning, to every one in Thy presence, the appropriate mercy which they need. How many have come up hither, as it were to ask life of Thee! How many burdened ones! And if Thou dost not strengthen them, they will fall. How many that are hungry! Thou, O God, only canst feed them. How many sorrowing and believing ones! The presence of Thy heart can heal their wounds, and nothing else can. How many that are in trouble of sin, and are unable to deliver themselves from the coil of the serpent, but Thou canst—for Thou, blessed Jesus, hast triumphed over the serpent, and bruised his head, and can teach us to do the same. How many tempted, and driven of temptation, as ships by violent winds! How many that have aspirations upon which fall mists and clouds! How many that are struggling at times for good, only to furnish to themselves the standard of right by which to rebuke their uses of life and of daily business! How many are there in Thy presence, that see enough of Thee and of duty, to feel that their life is painful and their character void.

And now, O Thou Blessed One, we beseech of Thee, that givest to everything in the earth, outwardly of its kind the food appropriate; Thou that art sending, in the universal sun, in showers, and in all the genial influences of the soil, the appropriate nourishment to things that grow before Thee, wilt Thou not give to us that sunlight, that descent of heavenly dew, that blessed and genial influence and soul-food that we severally need? Are we less loved than these outward things, and less cared for? Art Thou not the Creator of the outward world, but the Father of our spirits? We come to Thee this morning in our own behalf, and in behalf of every one in Thy

presence that needs prayer and divine help, beseeching that Thou wouldst do to each the things that they severally need. Raise up the fallen, strengthen the weak, and comfort the comfortless.

Wilt Thou, O Lord God, teach us to shed tears no more, or to weep with profit of soul? Make us to feel that this world is not our home, and may we be glad in the recognition of it. Make us to feel that the heavenly spirit-land is our home, and may we have, by thought at least, introduction there, that it may become real to us, that it may be dear, and by foretaste compensate the burden and the trouble of the way.

O Lord God, draw every one in Thy presence to Thee as the source of life and of health. May we cast ourselves upon Thee; may we feel that Thy guiding and loving care, Thy forgiveness, Thy grace, Thy culture, shall be our hope and our salvation; and so may we rest in Thee, and trusting may we see springing up in us the fruit of love, and of those good works which otherwise we could never perform.

Grant, we pray Thee, a blessing to rest upon all the congregations that gather together in the city at this time. Bless the pastors of the various churches, and the office bearers, all the members of the churches and congregations, and families that are grouped round about these several centres, and grant that there may arise from all worshiping assemblies grateful incense to Thee, and may this city be greatly blest by the example and active influence of Thy servants. May we have officers and magistrates that shall fear God and be just to men.

Purify our laws and institutions, and establish this city in righteousness. Grant that all our land may come up in remembrance before Thee. Inspire those struggles that are needful for the supremacy of good over evil; and

in the struggle, wilt Thou be found directing the courses of thought and intention, and give final victory to justice, to liberty, to purity, and truth. May we behold the advance of Christ, not in His visible form, but in His second coming, when He shall appear, and all mankind shall stand in the restored image of God. Grant, we pray Thee, that all these things may work out this final consummation, and that the glory of the Lord may fill the earth as the waters fill the sea—which mercies we ask in the name of the Ever Beloved, to whom, with the Father and Spirit, shall be praises unceasing. Amen.

THE BATTLE OF LIFE.

An Evening Prayer.

Our Heavenly Father, we rejoice that we are not any longer left to the interpretations of Thee by fear, neither art Thou made known to us by the interpretations of conscience. Thou hast taught us that Thou canst be known only by the interpretations of love. Thou hast set forth Thyself in our Saviour Christ, and Thou hast taught us what was the love of God in that which inspired Him to bear and to do; and we are taught to come to Thee through Him, as children come to parents, and all the bands and cords which draw us are affection. Thou art no longer lifted up in the immensity of the eternal world, explored by our trembling fears and looked for by our mortal apprehensions,—Thou art brought very near to us, yea, Thou dost dwell within us, and we learn of our own experiences to understand Thee; though we are so poor in excellence, though we are so much stained with sin, yet Thou hast been pleased to bear witness in us to the truths of Thy word: Now we rejoice in the fulness of Thy nature, in the majesty and the power of divine goodness. We marvel at all the exercises and magnanimities of Thy love, and learn to behold Thy grandeur more there than in the outstretch-

ing of Thine hand, in the turning of the earth, or in the sweeping through the heavens of all its host. Thou art God in these outward things; Thou art in Thine omnipotence and omnipresence Divine, but within only dost Thou bring us to bow before Thee—when we look within and see what is the royalty and nature of love in God—Thy mercy, Thy gentleness, Thy compassion, Thy goodness.

We beseech Thee that we may take heed of Thee, that we may become like unto Thee; for the law of selfishness works mightily within us and against our better knowledge—against our daily resolutions, and against our wishes even. It strives within us, overmastering often and subduing us. We desire to be led out from its bondage; we desire to come into the large element of true love, to become like God, to dwell among our fellowmen with constant benefactions and endless sympathies, and to make our way through life by doing favours, to walk as Thou dost walk, going about and doing good for evermore.

Wilt Thou help every one of us in this strife which we bear; in all the experiences which fall out by the way? Thou art teaching us by our outward avocations; Thou art teaching us by our social experiences; Thou art giving or taking away; Thou art putting burdens upon us or giving us release from trouble; Thou art teaching us on every side with motive and persuasion and influence.

May we have sight given to behold the hand of God in all these earthly experiences, to know what is the meaning and purpose of care and sorrow, to know what it means to be thwarted and turned aside from cherished purposes, to have our pride humbled and our vanity put to shame, to be made to pine and long for things

not reached. May we understand the mystery of Thy providences, and seek to co-operate with them in the evolution of all those higher and nobler states, which should characterize Thine own people.

Now Thou knowest what is the battle with each one; and we beseech of Thee that Thou wilt help every one to gain victories in his own place and over his own disposition. May we not be weary in well-doing; may none of us feel as though it were too long and continued a strife, too hard to bear. May we set before us evermore the vision of that rest which remaineth for the people of God. May we set before Thee Thine own image, calmly beholding us, and for ever looking forth upon the strife of life, not indifferent to its least act; and may we live as seeing Thee who art invisible, moving as before these eternal truths, and taking heart; and may we more and more manfully contest every day the battle of life unto the end of it.

Let us not be content with our own individual good. May we seek on every side to draw others with us to those that are linked to us by the chains of sympathy and affection, and those who are bound to us by the more intimate connections,—our kindred, that carry our blood and life with them.

May we more and more feel what are the obligations resting upon us towards those that are bound to us. May life become more real, obligations more binding, and kindness and love more sacred. May there be more and more of God in human affairs; may our daily experiences become more and more simple to our apprehension; and so may we walk, never forsaken of Thee, never forsaken of duty, never seemingly far off from heaven—never so far but that we can hear its sweet sounds and feel its blessed influences: and when the end of life shall

come, may we find that it is not an end but a beginning; may we find that we pass from glory to glory—from the veiled and shadowy glory of this sphere, to the unveiled and real glory of that eternal sphere. And we will give the praise of our salvation to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

SANCTIFIED KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

GRANT unto us, our Heavenly Father, this morning, access to Thee with all joyfulness. Thou dost not bar Thyself from our approach, but Thou lovest to have us run unto Thee, even as parents do their children. We ask that we may have that needed help, that divine brooding by which our understanding shall be cleared and lifted up—that teaching by which we shall receive power in all our spiritual parts. Inspire us to love, and through love to do all things. May the reading of Thy word be sweet to us, and may it be as the eating of fruit from the tree of life. May speaking from it not be void and empty, but full of profit. We pray that we may know how *to pray. Grant us also those joyful affections that shall overflow in songs before Thee; and may we never sing together without the dawn and vision of that blessed realm, where joys for evermore indite and roll themselves forth in psalms and hymns. So may even the earthly sanctuary be a suggestion and a foretaste of our heavenly rest. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.*

BEFORE SERMON.

WE adore Thee, O Thou that art lifted up above all the earth and above the heavens, infinite in power, in wisdom, in goodness, transcending all our experience or conception. We rejoice that Thou art perfect, though we know not what the fulness of that word means. All our thoughts of Thee are filled with wonder. As fast as

we learn, we admire and marvel; and that we shall never know by searching, nor complete our finding out, is a source of peace and joy to us, giving yet higher conceptions of what is Thy being and the riches of Thy nature.

We desire to accept Thee as Thou art revealed to us in the light of nature; and we thank Thee that now we can avail ourselves of that revelation, since Thou hast given us its commentary and interpretation in Thy word. We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt teach us the divine lesson how to bear forth the light of Scripture upon the world itself, until we shall have affixed to every part of it, and all its familiar faces, the teaching of God—till we know how to discern Thee in Thy standing works, and till we find ourselves walking in the midst of a Bible that is never shut, whose revelations are perpetually sounding and reporting themselves. Deliver us from the temptations which surround us to see only laws in nature. May we feel Thine heart throbbing throughout the world; may we believe that Thou art present, not merely as an intelligence and as a power, but in sympathy as a living being; may we walk with God, finding it impossible to be alone, having company for evermore wherever we are. And grant that it may not be merely for the lifting up of our understanding, not for our enjoyment, nor for the refinement of our tastes, that we grow in the knowledge of Jesus and of God the Father; but may we also find that this knowledge of Thee is making us like Thee in all truth and the love of truth; in justice and the love of justice; in benevolence and in all its controlling forms and influences. We beseech Thee that we may thus become like unto Thee; and by this likeness have this interpretation of God in our own experience.

But when we endeavour thus to learn, how are we

beset with constant selfishness; with ever domineering pride, with intrusive passions, with all manner of inquisitive evil! It is impossible for us to look and see the reflection of Thy face in our own hearts, for they do not lie still like tranquil lakes to reflect the stars above them; but are for evermore agitated by winds that play upon them and break up the reflection and cast nothing back to us. Oh, give us that purity of heart by which we may see God. Give us that peace by which we may be able to reflect Thee from untroubled affections.

We pray, O God, that Thou wilt teach us how to find every day occasion of grace. Teach us every day how to find our life in the things that are known to us and which Thou art putting into our hand. May we cease to look upon things under the ill-named forms of trial, care, trouble, and sorrow; may we look upon those things as so many teachings of God and so many lessons to be learned. May we be more brave of heart; may we be more brave in our affections. Take away from us all effeminacy of taste and all effeminacy of love, and all things that shall make us shrink from the battles of life or from any of its experiences. Give us that robustness, that strength, that patience, and that endurance, by which we shall be able to carry our daily experience with great cheerfulness and gladness. May we know how to be content with such things as we have; may our conversation not be with covetousness, nor anxiety, but may we walk as children of God, surely beloved; walk as in Thy presence, and live as seeing Thee who art invisible; and may we understand the reason of Thy providence in so far as it is necessary for our faith. May we know that Thou dost not willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men. May we endeavour to take all Thy providences, according to this intent; seek every day to

submit ourselves before the mighty hand of God, and to humble ourselves thereby.

We pray that Thou wilt help those in Thy presence that are striving against their easily besetting sins. Do Thou, O God, by Thy grace, stir us up with new thoughts of duty, with new desires of holiness. We understand better than we practise; we discern what we should be, but, alas! we are as men that perceive fruits upon the further shore, while the storm rolls deep and threatening between them, and they cannot cross over: and we see where excellencies are, but, alas! the passions which we cannot ford. O Lord, grant unto us, not only the power of discernment, but the power also that will enable us to overcome. May we know how to fulfil the duties that are put successively upon us; know how to avail ourselves of Thy strength, to abide in Thee, and to have Thee abide with us, that we may bear witness that we can do all things—Christ strengthening us; for our experience now is more that without Thee we can do nothing. We pray Thee that thus our life may be so joined to Thee, that we shall come to feel that we are branches, Thou the trunk; and that the fruit of goodness in us is of Thee; and may we thus glorify God by bearing much fruit. Deliver us from the temptations which easily environ us, and which spring out of the peculiar circumstances in which by Thy providence Thou hast placed us. Grant that every one of us may gird up his loins, and with all diligence, with all fidelity, and with all truth and justice, we may walk exemplifying the spirit of Christ, and blessing Thee by our holy obedience. And in those things where we are less instructed, may we have the illumination of Thy Spirit, that we may learn more and more, and practise what we learn.

We beseech Thee that Thou wilt bless our dear

friends; and remember our parents, remember our brothers, our sisters; remember their households; remember all our connections, and all with whom we have had sweet friendship and fellowship in life. Remember all that have shown us kindness or service of any kind; may we never forget to be grateful. We beseech Thee that Thou wilt remember those that have shown us ill-will, those that are our enemies; and if they are justified somewhat in our misconduct, may we repent for our own sakes and for theirs; and may we carry a mind above all animosity. May we love even our enemies, and may we seek to do them good. May that mind be in us which was also in Christ Jesus; and so may we be perfect as God is perfect—not by mere yearnings, not by mere conceptions of superior bliss and holiness, but may we seek perfection in these lower ranges by the subjection of our pride and intemperance, and by crucifying all those things that wound and offend love.

Remember those that are young. Grant, we beseech Thee, a prosperous voyage to every one of them towards manhood. We pray that they may not be cast away, nor sink, nor be misled, nor captured by piratical passion. Deliver them from the evil which is in the world. May they be shielded in the household; may they be shielded in their own souls by the workings of Thy Spirit, and by the teaching of those that are endeavouring to rear their children for God and for the benefit of the world. May their faith never fail, nor their fidelity cease. May they see their children grow up full of honour, and mighty, their own joy and the comfort of the world.

Remember those that are occupied in teaching on every side, day by day or from Sabbath to Sabbath; grant that they may be filled with a sense of the great-

ness of the work which they perform; may they know that those that work at the foundation must needs work beneath the ground, and that they are inconspicuous; and that while it requires great laboriousness, great patience, and great self-denial, it reaps in this world less fruit of praise than any other work. Yet may there be sacred and divine joy in the thought that that which man may not know nor appreciate, is known of God. and will never be forgotten; and may they have the abiding faith that they are going towards their reward. The crown of praise and rejoicing shall be theirs; and may they, therefore, be patient, vigilant, and faithful, filled with the spirit of Christ.

Bless all for whom we should pray. Remember those that preach the Gospel of Christ to-day; remember those churches that are gathered on every side of us, and fill the houses of Thy people with joy and with peace. We pray that Thy children of every name may be united in the bonds of a more perfect and patient love. May offences and divisions be taken away, and may that charity prevail which is yet to unite all the discordant elements of the world.

O Lord, we beseech of Thee that Thou wilt in Thine own infinite wisdom make haste and cut short the days which must come, and from which the world cannot shrink—the baptism of blood and of fire. Oh, let it take place speedily, that the end may begin to dawn; that when nations have been wrecked by war, and consumed enough by desolations, they may learn the things that shall make for peace—let it be known at last that a true love, standing upon a true justice, shall give peace and happiness the world throughout. We ask of Thee that we may learn it ourselves at home, and that we may not lay up for ourselves food for intestine interpellations and

mischiefs by-and-by. May we know that there is not in the strength of the right hand, in all the munitions of war, in all provisions of law, or in properties of every kind, either safety or salvation to that people that have forfeited justice and humanity. May we know that a nation is but an empty carcass, out of which these divine qualities have gone; and may this people, that is outwardly and nominally Christian at least, learn to see this—even Thy Church, O Lord Jesus. Teach Thy Church that it is a Christian duty to love and to be just, and for these to sacrifice everything else on the earth. Thou needest to die again; Thou art dying and crucified afresh in Thine own churches. Lord, rise again, and bring forth salvation in all our lands and among all Thine own people; and grant that the light and the glory of the Gospel may shine forth—not alone in letter and exposition, multiplied and iterated, but grant that there may be this inspired Gospel in the lives of Thy people, in all law, custom, and usage—in things public and in things private may the Spirit of Christ be breathed forth; and so may Thy Gospel spread till the earth is filled with Thy glory; and to Thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

PASSING FROM DEATH TO LIFE.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

Because Thou hast spared us, because Thou hast drawn us hither by the sweet attraction of Thy love, we are before Thee in this place, O Lord our God; and we desire now to remember Thy presence. And as they, that turn their faces to the sun, glow with the light thereof, and shine; so grant that there may fall upon us the effulgence of God, and that we may stand thus in the beauty of holiness. Cause Thy word to be touched by the divine power, that out of the deadness of its letter, Christ may come forth; even as from the death sepulchre, upon this blessed morning, He came into life. Release us from the bondage and the tyranny of care; release us from the despotism of fear; release us from all sordid influences. May we feel our better life rising up to-day within us, and holding communion with God. May we mingle our voices together in singing in the sweet fellowship of hymns and psalms; may we chant forth Thy praises; may Thy word be spoken unto edification, and may all the services of the sanctuary and the experiences of our homes on this day be for our souls' benefit and Thy glory. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

We thank Thee that we are not left, our Heavenly Father, to find our way unto Thee alone; we are borne up as upon clouds of remembrances. All the past of our lives, if we but understood its sacred teaching, would be

a revelation of the goodness and the patience of God towards us. We have walked in blindness, and as men walk upon the earth that Thou hast made, and do not understand it, and behold all the fair things which Thou hast formed and scarcely note them. As there are those to whom the heavens speak no lessons and the earth recites no history of God, so we have been in respect to the events of our own personal lives and the most memorable things Thou hast done in us and upon us. We are surrounded with God, whose hand has been upon us from our cradle upwards, and yet such brute creatures are we, so stupefied with conceit, so foolish for the pleasure of the senses, the running after that which men vainly call wisdom—that we have not regarded these wonderful providences, the care, the love, the forethought, the grace, the mercies of our God. But Thou hast been pleased to enlighten our minds, to touch us with the feeling of love, and to bring us into such personal union with Christ that His life is now breathed upon us. We are beginning to live, although yet we are but children. Would that we were more children in our faith and love!

We thank Thee that Thou hast begun this, giving us birth again as it were, starting us fresh in life, to interpret to us our own nature, to interpret the ways of God to man. The earth is a book, and every day a turned leaf therein; and our own selves are marvellous histories, all of them illustrating Thy care, Thy love, Thy tender mercy, Thy paternal goodness; and when at times all the thought of God comes upon us, when we stand, upon some bright Sabbath day like this, to worship Thee in Thine house, and we look back and think of the days gone by and the joys that have garlanded them and the mercies that we recognize, when the multitude of Thy

thoughts towards us come to us amid all the experiences of our lives together, in this sanctuary, and in our sweet social converse of Christ—our hearts are overwhelmed with a sense of Thy goodness ; and we know that there is more forgotten than remembered, more unnoticed at the time than that which we recognize. We know Thou hast always been He who doth exceeding abundantly more than we ask or think. We are surrounded by the memorials and memories and testimonies of Thy goodness to us.

And now, our Father, what can we say to Thee? What utterance of thanks can seem other than foolish by the side of such mercies? We are made dumb by the sense of Thy goodness. Our hearts cannot speak, and our lips have no power to interpret them; but Thou knowest, Thou seest. We do not need to speak before Thou wilt accept the unuttered germ of thought and feeling. Accept us this morning in our thanks, and in all the memory of Thy grace and our gratitude for it, according to that which Thou seest and not according to that which we speak. We desire, O God, no other service. Thy law is holy and just and good, and Thy service with its yoke and its burden is more truly liberty and lightness than the freest service of the world and of sin. Then only do we feel ourselves without care when we are most entirely surrendered to the spirit and will of our Father in heaven,—when we feel that our life is flowing with Thine, that we are part of that great scheme of redemption, that we are being borne in the bosom of the Church of Christ, that we are of them that are to be registered in heaven, the general assembly and the Church of the first-born there.

O Lord, when we walk with these thoughts in our souls, how are our meanest duties dignified! how are we

enthusiastic for all the parts of our earthly life, which has lifted up and illumined,—made a part of Thy work on earth! Oh, grant that we may behold Thee thus in all our least affairs, and that there may be from Christ that motive which we may fail to find in the nature of things around us. If we are called in poverty, may we not be discouraged nor neglectful because there seems no motive to activity. May we remember Christ and find in Him all that we need. If we are in obscurity, may we not withdraw from enterprises of love and kindness, but remember Christ, and find in Him every consideration moving the human soul. Though we are surrounded by trying circumstances, vehement assaults of temptation, and difficulties of every kind, oh, remember us. Teach us to remember Thee, and may we draw from the bosom of Thy kindness and love that strength which we need, being continued to us that we may not fail and perish.

We pray that Thou wilt be very gracious to every one according to his need. Thou knowest the universal heart; there is not one in Thy presence whose name is not known to Thee; there is not one whom Thou dost not know better than he knows himself: nor has any event ever transpired that Thou hast not beheld it, for Thou hast carried us always in the arms of Thy providence. Are any in affliction? Thou knowest what man doth not; Thou canst comfort. Give forth the consolations of the Holy Ghost, to draw near to every one by Thine own nature, and by the might of Thine own glorious love; and we pray that they may find themselves strangely quieted and lifted up, and as children that are hurt are caught in the bosom of a mother's love and hushed, and scarcely know what hath comforted them or what strange joy hath befallen them —so, be pleased to fulfil that declaration that Thy love

and remembrance are more than a mother's, and take into the arms of divine consolation those that need Thee, that they may be hushed in Thy bosom, and find there that peace which passeth all understanding.

Arm with strength, according to the duties of their life, those that stand in the midst of human affairs. Leave them not unguarded, leave them not to be tempted without help; comfort, and with every temptation give them rescue. Teach us all how better to serve Christ in our ordinary and daily avocations; and may we have this feeling upon us that it is Christ that we serve and not ourselves. We pray that we may be led, not by pride nor by selfishness nor by any feeling, motive, and passion, but that we may be led by faith and by love.

Grant that the events of Thy providence may be blessed to us spiritually and to our eternal good. We are strangers and pilgrims in this world. May we heed it. May we bless God for all the fruit, and all the flowers that bloom or hang by the way tempting our necessity, but may we never sit down nor desire to embower ourselves on earth, as if this were good enough for our home; and may we bear about with us in our most pleasant experiences the thought of the better land, and may every joy that comes to us be but the distant sound of the heavenly bells that call us hence to the eternal city.

Grant that every day we may so live, thinking of the future, that death shall be the most radiant of portals, urging through which we ascend to triumph and eternal victory. May it not seem to us a sad thing to grow old. As daylight begins to dawn upon our darkness, leaving its glory there—as one sense after another indicates that Thou art preparing to take down this mortal frame—as

we behold these signs and tokens of outward decay, oh, grant that there may be a deep peace, an inward joy, and that the thought of our blessed immortality may be to us as a balm in every trouble, as light in all darkness, as encouragement under all oppressions and trials, and as a guide and an inspiration when things seem to us sapless and dead.

Oh, our adorable Saviour, since Thou art the way and upon Thee we walk, grant that, having our life hidden in Thee, we may at last go forth, not doubting, not wandering, not lost in death, but may we go forth to find ourselves called by vehement voices of love, and may there be given to us a choral entrance into heaven; may there come forth not only those that have been of us and with us and associated in sweet and blessed church fellowship, but grant that there may come forth those that are to be our superiors and teachers there; may we go forth out of this school and drill of life, and find ourselves admitted to manhood and to the home and city of our God, with songs and joys and blessings resting upon us; and to Thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

JESUS SEEING THE TRAVAIL OF HIS SOUL.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

Our Heavenly Father! already Thou hast opened the temple of Thy worship; Thou hast received us Thyself; Thou art our host, and we are Thy guests. Stretch forth Thine hand to give us that food which we need. Speak unto every one of us by name. May we feel that we have come home, and be able to say, "Our Father." We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt grant us the light that we need and desire for the reading of Thy word; grant unto us that enlarged state of heart which shall enable us to interpret its principles, that we may know them experimentally. Draw us forth graciously in prayer, communing with us, and inciting us to communion. Help us to sing, and accept our songs, and bless us in all the words of instruction; and in everything that we shall do this day, may we have the peace and the defending purity of God with us. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

We thank Thee, Thou eternal Father, that the glorious work, the manifestation of Thyself through Jesus Christ is completed. We thank Thee that the light now shineth into the world, and into the darkness thereof, even though it comprehendeth it not. We rejoice that the day-spring is with Thee; and Thou that nourishest

the morning and teachest it how to wax in strength and spread itself abroad upon the hemisphere, Thou also shalt teach the day-spring from on high to come upon this earth, and carry forward the first faint dawnings to the glorious consummation, when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth, and the glory of Christ shall be the glory of the whole human family; and the day cometh and tarrieth not, though to us it seems to linger, for our whole long life measures but one single step of Thine, and Thou art travelling faster than we know.

It is our slowness, our brevity, and our ignorance, that makes it seem that Thou delayest Thy coming. We comfort ourselves, and are rejoiced without sight, to believe that Thou, O blessed Jesus, wilt yet see of the travail of Thy soul and be satisfied. We know not what that means; but when we look upon Thy yearnings, when we look into those words of boundless love, when we see Thy suffering and refusing to shrink, drinking the cup of anguish to its very dregs, unwilling to descend from the cross, that Thou mightest fulfil the desire of Thine heart in the salvation of the world, we have some conception of what that is which Thou longest for, and what shall be the glory that shall satisfy such love and such desire, stronger than suffering or death. And Thou shalt be satisfied. The reaping shall be a thousandfold more than the sowing; and though we cannot measure nor put bounds, nor in anywise analyse and define what shall be this glorious triumph of redeeming grace in the earth, we are kindled with great gladness, joy, and gratitude towards Thee, in believing that there comes yet a populous summer in the future, such as the earth hath not known, and that the glory of the Lord shall make this poor sin-stricken struggling earth, that hath only ruled to groan and travail in pain until now—Thou shalt make

it as illustrious, wheeling among the heavenly stars, for its joy, its purity, and God's goodness in it, as it hath been sad for sorrow and sin and woe, and even weeping.

O Lord, we love to look away, though it be into the mist made luminous in Thee. We love to look at the very cloud of Thy glory, though it part not, and we do not see Thee within it. Our souls move within us and we are glad. We desire to take comfort in all our part of life, in our struggles, and in the little building which we are permitted to have. We desire to take comfort by a steadfast regard to the future, not curious about what is unseen, yet comforting ourselves in the frigid, cool realities of the present. We love, O God, to warm ourselves by hope in the future; for often and often we have realized that we are saved by hope from despondency, from discouragement, from repining and murmuring, and are clothed afresh and go forward rejoicing in a poor naked way.

And now, O Thou blessed One, we pray, while Thou dost not reveal to us the secrets of Thy counsel and all the fruit of Thy decrees, yet we pray that Thou wilt manifest to us that which is better,—something more of Thine own self. It is not so much what Thou wilt do with other worlds, nor with time, nor with Thine own administration, we desire; we ask to know what Thou wilt do with Thine own and with us. We ask to be drawn nearer to Thy heart, to understand what it is to know something of the love of God, the whole of which passes understanding. We desire to have a more near and divinely-inspired conception of what is the sweetness, the purity, the faithfulness, and the endurance, of the love of Christ to sinful souls. We are creatures made up of flesh and passion and appetite; we have selfishness and pride and a thousand evil things in us;

and we cannot, when our own moral conception is clarified and beams with the reflected light of vision, we cannot even love our own selves, or approve ourselves, and yet Thou dost look upon us, and dost love us, and Thy heart is towards us. All the drawings that we have of good, all the pointings of aspiration, all the kindling of sparks and flames in us, are of Thee, because Thou lovest us. Grant us, then, to have some conception of what that divinity is that knows how to love the sinful, and to purify them out of their sin by love, that blessed bath of God in which we are washed, and whence we are yet to ascend triumphantly white as snow.

O God, we desire to know something of this love of Christ, both as a thing to be thought of and as a thing more to be felt. We desire to be redeemed by it; we desire that it may cause all things weak in us, and that should be strong, to grow, and that it may cause the things that are strong which should be weak, to diminish. Grant, we beseech Thee, that we may have in Thy nourishing bosom all that which Thou hast taught us of Thyself in the nourishing by the mother of her child. Grant that we may have the feeling of a child; may we be little children before God; may we know how to nestle in the bosom of Thy promises; how to look up and say, against every fear, "Well, it is my Father;" may we know how to put down every temptation by the feeling and warmth of our Father's heart. Grant that we may have this entrance into the bright life of love, into this peace with passeth all understanding. May we thus have the purity wrought in us which love works, beginning to show more and more of God. May we know out of which window of the soul to look when we would descry Thee; and turning from reason, and from all powers and passions, may we look out through the orbed

glass of faith and love, and there behold Thee, and gaze till the vision grows, till growing it draws near, and drawing near it fulfils the promises and comes in and abides with us: and so may we feel adopted, and know that we are God's beloved children, not because we see in ourselves the things that make us worthy to be children, but because we have a conception of God that teaches us that He can love imperfect and sinful and unlovely creatures; and grant that the thought of God's power, God's depth, and the endless abundance of love and of its transforming power upon the soul, may grow in us; not so much our thought of worthiness, not so much our thought of atonement, not so much any expectancy founded upon our will or persistence in good, but may we have this feeling—that Thy mercies are endless, and that the power and abundance of Thy goodness is beyond all expression or thought or imagination, and so may our life be hid in Thine, and as streams flow out from the sides of mountains but drops beginning, and rills going forward to constitute the broad stream, so from the mountain of Zion may all the sources of our life come, and may the stream thereof go forth.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, that Thou wilt bless with us all whom we love and those whom we ought to love. Bless, we beseech Thee, the whole family of man. We long for that day of bright prediction. Our souls are troubled except when we shield and clothe ourselves from the thought of what man is doing to man. The earth verily is tormented, and its time has not yet come for peace. O Thou patient One! O Thou wonderful God of long-suffering, either make haste or else give us faith to wait; and grant, we beseech Thee, that in our lifetime every one of us may cast something into the

treasury of the Lord. May we all be workers together with God for the redemption of this lost world.

And we beseech Thee, that we may have a renewed desire to be ourselves pure, noble, heroic, strong, and constant in all good things. May we fear not the face of man nor man's tongue; may we fear nothing but God; and may we fear Thee only because we love Thee and fear Thee in love. May we be emancipated from all other bondage of fear, and so may we grow careless while we take care of every duty; so may we be released from fright, apprehension, and all the things that weigh down the spirit and consume the marrow of life. In God may we be strong, and write upon our banner, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

May all those that preach Thy Gospel preach the Gospel of Christ; may it be the Gospel of truth dissolved in their own consciousness, and may it not be deductions of the letter but the life of the spirit, and may there be great power given to Thy people. May their joys increase; may Thy churches purify themselves, may their light and virtues become more and more significant to divine justice, purity, and truth. May the day hasten when the Church, which is the universal family of man redeemed, shall possess the earth, and the glory of the Lord fill it as the waters fill the sea; and to Thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

SACRAMENTAL SEASON.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

Thou art exalted for ever; and being God, Thou sendest forth innumerable mercies which fall upon the earth as the rain and the light, which come not in vain, and return not to Thee, but accomplish the purpose whereto Thou sendest. Be pleased, then, out of Thine infinite fulness to clothe our poverty to-day. Give us bread from our Father's table; reach forth Thy hand which hath in it the keys of life and death; open the doors of our understanding, and open the doors of our hearts, and bring forth into life every grateful thought, every sweet and divine affection, and fill us this day with the spirit of devotion. May we know how to call Thee Father, from the swellings of our hearts; may we know how to thank Thee, how to rejoice in Thee, how boldly to express our gladness and every feeling which comes from our heart towards Thee. May we be blest in Thy word, in its reading and in speaking from it; may we be blest in prayer; may we know the way as Thine angels know it, up through the trackless air by faith to Thy throne; may we be blest in the fellowship of song, rejoice together, and sing with the innumerable throng that hymn around about Thee in heaven, joining our imperfect songs to their glorious anthems. May the whole earth, and all the realm of the universe praise Thee this day. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

Thou, that wert a man of poverty and acquainted with griefs, art lifted up now above all sorrow, and art draw

ing thitherward all Thine that are in affliction, temptation, trial, and difficulty. Thou wilt not permit any to be taken out of Thy hand; but wilt keep to the end all whom Thy Father hath given Thee. We rejoice in Thy supremacy, Thy faithfulness, and Thy powers. All our hope of continuance in good and of victory in the issue of life as in Thy watching and warfare.

Thou, O Christ, art appointed the Captain of our salvation; following Thee we have hope, but without Thee we can do nothing. Thou art our bread and our raiment; Thou art the door of our dwelling and the temple; Thou art our life and the sword of our defence; Thou art our friend and our physician; Thou art our teacher and our deliverer; Thou art our Saviour now, our Redeemer in the hour of death, and our final exceeding great reward. We hail and bless Thy name this morning; Thou hast sent this Sabbath that walks with quiet feet and ardent brow merging from storm, to teach how Thy blessings and Thy gracious succour come forth from the dark and utmost storms. May we read not only the messages of Thy word, but day by day understand and interpret the ways of nature, which, speaking to us, is the reminding voice of God.

We beseech Thee that to us this may be a day of brightness, of calmness, and joy. May we have to-day no purposes of pride, and none of selfishness, which war against Thee and against our own souls; may we lay aside all the burdens of care and of distress, and come home to our Father's house, and around our Father's table, in fellowship one with another. May we dismiss the world and all its troubles, that we may sit peacefully and lovingly, trustfully and gladly in the presence of our Redeemer.

O Lord God, Thou dost love to house Thy children—

Thou dost love to take them to that imperial place in Thine own heart. Thou dost love, when the world thunders round about them and storms upon them, to hide them in Thy pavilion, until the storm be overpast. Now grant that this Sabbath day may lift itself up over all of us as the pavilion of God. May we dwell in it secure, restful, and at peace from every piercing fear, from every enduration and thought of guilt. May we have the peace of God. Oh, let the light of Thy countenance fall tranquilly upon our hearts undisturbed; and whatever may have been our weekly care or trouble, to-day may we see God; to-day may we reach Christ; to-day may we feel that our whole life is instinct with the Holy Ghost; and may our affections move in harmony with Thy will, and our thoughts tend upwards towards Thee. May we have that peculiar and unmistakeable blessing of the sanctuary, with which Thou art wont to enrich and bless Thine own dear children.

We beseech Thee that Thou wilt not only grant this consummation, but that it may be for the furtherance of our faith, that it may establish us in our trust in Thee, and that it may give us courage to do right, always, and everywhere, and that it may make our faith in Thine over-ruling providence immutable, so that we shall not be turned out of the way by any threat or fear. May we not be afraid what man shall do unto us; for if God be for us, who can be against us?

Bless, we beseech of Thee, according to the wants of individual hearts, every one in Thy presence. If any have come hither from curiosity, if any bearing burdens; yet in the presence of God, may every one be pressed in the open and secret recess of his heart to offer up praise and thanksgiving, and to make confession of sin. Oh, may every one come before Thee, that knowest the thoughts

and intents of the heart, and open it that Thou mayest survey and search in it the whole interior life with Thy cleansing eye.

Grant, we beseech Thee, that we may be able to-day as in the presence of God, to consecrate anew every power, every affection. May we lift up our plans, which we have formed in twilight and are half-hidden in their moral character from ourselves, and survey them in the light of Thy countenance. May we look upon all the forces and tendencies of our life to-day, and measure them again by the truth of God's word. May we stand to-day and bear upon ourselves that light of the eternal world, that shall throw just light and measurement upon all our thoughts and feelings, our habits and processes, so that we may to-day indeed meet our God rejoicingly. Are any cast down? Thou hast strength for those that will suffer Thee to lift them up. Are any pierced and bleeding their life away in grief? Thou that hast died in unutterable anguish hast, in Thy blood, balm and remedy for every lesser grief that the world shall know.

Are any in Thy presence discouraged and disheartened and dissolved within them by shame and conscious guilt? Thou, O Jesus, hast inspired penitence and confidence of restoration and purity in thrice ten thousand souls, and heaven is full to-day of those that never thought to reach it. All through the shining ranks come those that are for ever and for evermore pouring precious ointment from the alabaster-box of their own hearts; they are redeemed, they are washed, they are cleansed, who on earth seemed to themselves soiled to the inmost; so great is Thy power to forgive sins, so great is Thy power to cleanse the conscience and to mend the broken life. Oh, grant that there may be none in Thy presence, that

shall cast away God, because they have cast themselves away.

We beseech Thee that Thou wilt draw near to those that are sordid and burdened with unnecessary care, who take care with unnecessary burden; we pray they may learn every day to love the things that are placed for them as duties, and may they perform their task each day in the name of God; may they learn how to bear trouble for Christ's sake, and so find some sweetness in it. We beseech Thee that they may feel, in having their way in the wilderness, that while they are removing their obstacles, they meet many precious vines with clusters most refreshing, that they press many odorous things that give them fragrance by the way, and so may they toil on, content if it be Thy will to labour in things that are poor and humble, to bear burdens as good soldiers, looking not here but hereafter for rest and reward.

We beseech Thee, O God, that Thou wilt grant, if there are any in Thy presence who know not which way to look for the East, show them at last the bright and the morning star. Gazing upon that, ere long bring them forth and suffuse them with the light of the rising Sun of Righteousness, with healing in His beams. If any are struggling with themselves at times like mariners overblown of storms and seemingly about to go down; if any are struggling to overcome old habits, to staunch corrupt inclinations, to put down all wicked tendencies; if there are any that seem to themselves at times almost castaways, may they be led into the bosom of Christ; may they go nowhere else, but steer right to Thine heart. It is a stone of stumbling to those that break upon it, but a rock of defence to those that come by faith. Grant that every one of us may know how, more nearly than

the favoured disciple, to lay our head upon the bosom of Jesus, and there may our cares fly, and all our troubles be hushed, and our soul find its rest.

Bless all that worship to-day in other congregations; strengthen Thy dear servants to preach the truth as it is in Jesus. Restrain all temptations that beset Thy Church; give victory to Thy people in all the struggles that they maintain in the name of Jesus. Grant that the whole earth may speedily see Thy salvation; and may the glory of the Lord shine as the sun travelling in the greatness of his strength. May we depart speaking a better speech of Christ, and when these seats are no longer filled with our forms, may our children and their children rise up and take our places and carry forward Thy work; and when all our worldly experiences end, and our history closes here, may it open with grace and glory in heaven, there to go on unto perfection; and to Thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

STRENGTH IN GOD.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

Our Father—Grant us that blessing, without which we shall remain in darkness, as those that are blind. Quicken us, that we may discern Thee. Move our affections, that leaving mere earthly influences they may begin to lift themselves up this morning to seek Thee, and fasten devotedly upon Thee. Bless the reading of Thy word, and may it be as the bread of God handed down to our want. Bless the union of prayer, and may we have our petitions suggested by Thy Spirit, that they may be granted. Bless us in giving thanks, especially in songs of thanksgiving and praise; and in our endeavours for instruction from Thy word may we have Thy guidance; may the exercises of the sanctuary, and of our several homes this day be divinely accepted and blest. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

Thou art a very pleasant help in time of trouble, O Thou that art the salvation of the earth and the Saviour of men! Therefore will we put our trust in Thee. We lean upon other things which Thou hast appointed, but their strengt his of God; and Thou art beneath everything, and dost lift up everything that is able to stand with Thine own strength; and Thou givest Thy people faith to discern that all strength is of God, so that we

are enabled to feel that Thou art in everything, and that all the attributes and uses of human life and of nature itself are of God. We rejoice that the savour of Thine own self is in all the earth, and rejoice that we by faith know Thee. We have been enlightened by the word of God, and by the teaching of the Spirit through the word.

We rejoice that now our reading of truth is augmented, and we go forth from that Holy Scripture able to understand what Thou hast written in the work of nature, that primal revelation, but which men were not able to understand aright. We rejoice, O God, that Thou art continuing from day to day to turn some leaves, and giving us further knowledge ; that we are permitted to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We mourn that we have had so little growth, and borne so little fruit, and that so poor ; and we desire, quickened by Thee, encouraged by Thy smiles, nourished and drawn mightily forward by Thy gentleness, O Lord God, we desire in times yet to come, to be more and more perfect disciples. We rejoice that time itself is developing strength, and that in the natural unfoldings of our soul, if we are guided by Thy strength, we are coming into those states in which more knowledge is possible, greater depths of feeling, and a wider round of experience.

And we desire, O Lord Jesus, to be taken by the hand and led into all truth. May we not arrest Thee by our pride ; may we not be given over to the folly of conceit, thus thinking we know more than all, when we know nothing. May we have that spirit of little children, by which we shall know how to confide before we know the reasons of confidence. May we ever find towards Thee an open heart of belief, of trust, of love. May we live

by that faith which works by love. Purify us, we beseech Thee, from the power of the flesh. May we know how to control ourselves, so that our whole soul and body may be sanctified. May we desire to carry about whatever Thou hast given us, whatever endowments, and whatever organization, as a gift of God, most precious, and consecrated to His service.

We beseech Thee, that Thou wilt help us in the several allotments and appointments of our life, where Thou hast sent us. Thou hast need of witnesses in every place. Thou art teaching the world, and the worlds to come that are spectators, what is the immense diversity of Thy grace in Thy people; and art unfolding from the human race in their several positions, something of that infinite treasure that is in Thine own soul's goodness. May every one of us understand, when we are in peculiar relations and circumstances, that it is because we are there to bear witness which no one else can bear. We pray, for Christ's sake, that we may study the things that are just and true, the things that are meek and pure, the things that are gentle and patient, the things that are living and right. We pray that we may be guided by sight so far as that is best, and by faith where sight fails, and where neither sight nor faith avail us, where we know not at all, nor even imagine, may we be guided by the presence of that all-surrounding Providence. Do Thou think for us, and may we be saved by Thy knowledge.

We beseech Thee that Thou wilt teach us how to look upon each other as of one household, not merely those that are confederated in the bonds of one church covenant, but as those who love the Lord Jesus Christ. May we feel that we are a common household. May we not vex each other, nor selfishly follow our own sectional

ends, but may we live in sweet fellowship with Thee, indivisible; and we beseech Thee to teach us how to look upon all mankind with that same pitifulness that Thou hast. May we ever feel that all are created in the image of God, and destined to live with God eternally.

Grant, we beseech of Thee, that the sight of our eyes may affect our hearts as we pass through this world, as a vale of tears; may it not be ours to ravage, to destroy, to oppress, to appropriate, to hoard, and perpetuate the misery that already hath lingered too long; but may we be the children of grace, and diffuse on every side the odour of peace, the reasons of purity, and the influences of love; and may we be workers together with God, in the redemption of this world. We pray that Thou wilt bless the instrumentalities which Thy people have appropriated to the great objects of benevolence in this world. Bless those that labour among the poor and ignorant, that train the young and turn them early from the ways of vice and crooked crime into the straight way of justice and purity.

Be with those, we pray, that in foreign lands preach an unsearchable Gospel to the heathen; may they be built up themselves in holy faith, and may the power of godliness inspire their labour and give it success. Be with those, we beseech Thee, everywhere, that are diffusing the word of truth, and sending abroad the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. We pray that Thou wilt build up Thy kingdom in every form. Diffuse more and more the spirit of the Gospel into secular affairs. May all institutions of law and justice, may all governments and organizations of the world conform themselves to the spirit of Christ, and represent the spirit of His Gospel, and that day be hastened when war shall cease, and

slavery as darkness fly away; when all misdeeds shall pass and be a thing but remembered, and the glory of the Lord fill the earth as the waters fill the sea. And to Thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. **Amen.**

DEPENDENCE.

AN EVENING PRAYER.

We thank Thee, our Father, that Thou hast not cast us forth from heaven in Thy wrath; we are not born into this world as though we had fallen headlong; Thou hast sent us hither that Thou mightest bring us back again in the day of Thy glory with joy and everlasting triumph. Nor wilt Thou suffer us to be overborne nor tempted beyond that which we are able to bear. Thou wilt open a door of escape; Thou wilt lead us forth out of our sin and out of our transgression; Thou wilt heal the love of sin in us; Thou wilt by Thine own blessed Spirit work in us mightily to will and to do of the things which are pleasing to Thee. We thank Thee for this assurance of Thy providence; for this certainty of Thy grace; for this wonder and wealth of Thy love; for this thoughtfulness in our behalf. How great is the sum of Thy thoughts of us! How precious when they come to our realization; that Thou dost think of us, and think to love, and love to succour and redeem! We cannot reach the height and the glory of this, but we receive it gladly. This is the succour which we need.

Much as we can do in this life, and are made to do for ourselves; much as we can help one another, Thou,

O God, art yet needful for us. We need Thee, that we may rest; we need Thee that we may be raised up out of rest; we need Thee that we may be able to discharge the duties which are incumbent upon us one among others in life; we need Thee more that we may not be held down to earth by our daily duties, but that we may learn from them to rise to higher conceptions of life and ideals of character, that we may be able to take hold upon the invisible and eternal truths of Thy kingdom. We need Thee every day; we need Thee sleeping or waking. When we lie down and cannot think for ourselves, we are safest; then most we need Thee when we rise up and begin to go forth and act upon our own judgments, and are open to ten thousand temptations; we need Thee in the things which we do best, and how much more in all other things!

And now, we beseech Thee, that it may not seem to us either terrible or hard that we should open the door of the soul and call Thee in to dwell with us. May we desire above all other things to be guided by Thee; may we desire those things that most nearly represent Thy will; may we not sit down in our own complacency, nor flatter ourselves with the opinions of others, nor live under any servile obedience to the things that now are, and are of esteem among men. Be Thou discerned of us, and reveal Thyself to every one. May we be dissatisfied with ourselves, with our past lives, yet not in a repining spirit, but may we forget the things that are behind, and may we reach upward and press forward. We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt bless us according to our several necessities. With some there is a strife of pride evermore, but Thou hast pity on the proud; Thou wilt help them, and dost love to help rather than punish, if they will permit Thee. There are those that are made weak

by their vanity every day, and led by it into transgression. We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt teach them how to wage that battle of faith which belongs peculiarly to them, and may they look at those things as Thou dost, and see that their life lies where most is to be overcome; and may they not wish that they were others, or that their circumstances were changed, or that anything was different but purity. May they long for greater manhood, for more holiness before God, and may they accept their circumstances and their discipline as the means which Thou dost point to them of grace. We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt bless those that are exercised particularly with worldly care, and in its midst find themselves drawn away and tempted, and overcome by temptations. Remember any that find themselves mourning the violation of their own moral sense, who see how far their feet slide, who know how irreconcilable with the law of God is the life they have lived, but who spend their time in repentance.

We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt help them to set up Thy banner, which is victorious over temptation and over the adversary. We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt give them such confirmation in good that they may at last begin to build higher than their foes can reach, and beyond the reach of any more unsettling.

If there are those in Thy presence, that by ignorance or heedless mistakes, who, by courses of folly and wickedness in times past, are suffering severe penalties and trouble, we pray that they may not spend their time in useless murmuring, that they may not rebel against the past, but rather may they take hope of Thee, and with all their heart turn to the living God, and find in a newness of life that peace which they cannot find in the present nor in the remembrances of the past; and may every one

have hope in Thee. May none feel that they are in a state without hope; the most guilty, the most wicked, those that have sinned longest and deepest and darkest, may they remember that there is a grace of God in Christ Jesus even to them, to those afar off as well as to those that are near. Oh, make Thine atoning mercy and the glory of Thy forgiving goodness apparent unto every one, and may every one be able to see that, in proportion as they are forgiven, according to the magnitude of their iniquity and the greatness of their transgression will be the glory transcending which Thou wilt have, if Thou showest mercy unto them; and while we doubt ourselves, and while we may distrust one another, and while at times all things seem unstable and unsatisfactory, oh, save us from that last and worst disaster,—distrusting Thee. May our faith in God be immutable, and even when we are so guilty that we cannot look up, at least may we be able to bow the head, to smite upon our breasts, and say, "God be merciful to us sinners." And if we dare not sit by Thee in Thy throne, if we dare not come to Thee as children to the knees of their parents, and look up, at least may we sit down at Thy feet, and find there that we are sitting at the feet of a Redeemer, pitying, gentle, forgiving, all-succouring. We pray that none may be discouraged; may every one accept his life-work; may every one, undismayed and undaunted, go forward from good to better, from strength to strength. We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt make us useful; while we are seeking for our own growth, may we not treasure up strength gained or experiences or joys for our own selfish using, but as we receive so may we give. May our whole life be a life of seed-sowing; may our whole life be a work for God and for man.

We pray that Thou wilt bless all the churches that

name the name of Christ in this city. Wilt Thou strengthen them to do Thy work; redeem all that are called by Thy name, and make them lovely? May Thy servants that preach the Gospel be inspired of God to preach it; may the witness of Thy Spirit go with the preaching of the truth. Wilt Thou search the hearts of Thy servants as with a lighted candle; reveal to them their true nature, and the significance of their whole life? We pray that Thou wilt go forth through our whole land, deepening the foundations of piety, raising up greater zeal for God, more purity of intention and of life, and filling this whole land with the power of the Gospel of Christ. May we be saved from a dead-letter Gospel; may we be saved from the formalism of unvital institutions; may we be saved from the timidity of men; may we be filled with a sacred, a holy, a burning zeal of Christ, and may love temper it, and restrain it, and only that, and so may this land see the salvation of our God. Pity the condition of the world; make haste, Thou that lingerest not, but seemest to linger, because Thou livest so long. Make haste, we beseech of Thee, even by reason of our infirmity, for we wait for Thee, and our eyes fail for Thy salvation. Oh, kindle the morning, then, and bid the light advance, and the glory of the nations, that we may take hold upon Thy promises, and interpret them in the light of growing events, until the day shal come to be seen by us, either from earth or from heaven when the glory of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters fill the sea. And to Thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit, evermore.

GOD'S GOODNESS TO THE ILL-DESERVING.

AN EVENING SERVICE.

WHILE we are walking in darkness, Thou, oh, our light and life, art in the unclouded heaven. With us are storms; with Thee is everlasting peace. Breathe forth of Thy life and peace upon us, that we may be undisturbed by fear; that we may be kept quiet amidst all those contests and collisions which disturb men; that we may not be swung to and fro as the pendulum vibrating incessantly. May we have that peace that passeth all understanding, which no sorrow or anxiety can long disturb, which no greed or avarice or discontent can take away. May we feel the warmth of Thy love, the certainty of Thy promises, and the glory of that wealth which is ours because we are Thine,—the nearness of the promised land into which we may almost look, and upon which we shall ere long step.

Grant that we may not be puffed up, as other men are; nor, as they are, cast down and dejected because our purposes are ended and our way is turned upside down. For, are we not included by all the promises of God, which are yea and amen? Hast Thou not circled us around about with bands that are stronger than walls of stone, and sharper than the very fire itself? Hast Thou

not made us the objects of Thine own heart's desire, and have we not the love of God and the faithfulness of God as pledges for our safety; for our conduct through this world and our everlasting safety in the world to come? Since we were born, upon what have our sorrows stumbled? What have been the sources of our sorrow and growth? Mostly but vain desires, but conflicts of pride, but the manifestations of selfishness. How have we found our lower natures checking us, when we have been by Thy power, by Thy grace, and by Thy truth, lifted up into the realm of our religious feelings, and so brought near to Thee! Thou evermore hast made us walk upon all trouble, and keep it beneath us, to despise the vain things of this life, and yet to count it all joy when we fall into trials and temptations, to rejoice even in afflictions—to sing at midnight, and walk in the light, though our lamp had gone out.

Thou, O God, canst work wonderfully in the hearts of those that put their trust in Thee. To this we are Thy witnesses; we bear testimony to Thy faithfulness, to Thy gentleness, and to Thy power for good, succouring and encouraging us every day—yet punishing us in Thy faithfulness when rods and stripes are the best medicine. Thou art not tender to indulge us; Thou art not stern and just to distress and destroy us; Thou art tempering Thy justice by mercy, and Thou art by love and mercy, by justice and by judgment, by all the motives of hope and of fear, by commands and by persuasions, through nature, through the daily progress of our lives in society, through all the influences of truth upon our souls, in our meditating hours, and in our Sabbaths of rest, by ten thousand instrumentalities in all periods of time, Thou art educating us and preparing us for our residence in Thine own immediate presence; for Thou hast made us Thine

own, and it is known in heaven that we are coming thither, and Thou wilt yet present us before the throne of Thy Father, spotless, without any blemish or wrinkle or any such thing.

And now we bless Thy name, we laud and magnify Thee; Thou art the high and the holy God, Thou art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, but blessed be Thy name Thou hadst rather heal than punish us. We bless and praise Thy goodness, Thy benignity, Thy patience, Thy lenity, Thy justice, and Thy sparing mercy, which have made our lives rich and our hearts so hopeful. Bless, we beseech Thee, all in Thy presence. Thou knowest what are the thoughts and meditations of them that come forth before Thee; Thou knowest what ones of them are good. Meet every heart, not according to its petition, which is of ignorance, but according to Thy glorious knowledge. Think for us better than we can think for ourselves; feel for us more truly and worthily than we know how to feel for ourselves, and then do exceeding abundantly more for us than we can ask or think.

Bless those that are not gathered with us. If any are absent from home, spare their lives, prosper them in lawful errands, and bring them back to their own house and to their sanctuary again. Bless any that have been abroad and come again with thanksgivings, praising, and blessing God for sparing mercy. Are any sick? *But what is sickness but God's medicine, and then best when it is mortal!* We beseech Thee that Thou wilt cheer and comfort any that are languishing; give them visions of the far-coming land, and may all of us count ourselves strangers in this world, then only at home when we rest with God. Help those that bear burdens, to be patient and to be strong under their burdens. Help those that

are grieved and wounded of heart, to look up unto Him, whose hands and side were pierced for them, and learn of Him.

Grant to every one, we entreat, the mercies they need for deliverance, and the mercies that they need for riches in Christ; and when we shall have passed through the scenes of this mortal life and draw near to the celestial gate, may it stand open ready for us, and may we see a choral host waiting to give us an abundant entrance into heaven. May none of us or of ours knock at the celestial gate and hear from Thee the fatal words, "I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity;" but may we stand ransomed, purified, and saved in Thy presence, and we will give to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit the praise of our salvation for ever and for evermore. Amen.

GOD THE ONLY OBJECT OF TRUST.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

Our Heavenly Father! Already Thou hast blessed us and anticipated our asking. We recognize Thine hand that opens the morning; we recognize Thy bounty that gives to us the rest which this day is wont to bring. And now we are gathered in this appointed place, which has been made dear to us by Thy grace in days past, that again we may receive the Holy Ghost—known by all desires inspired by Thee, by wholesome instruction received by its ministration, by all joy and peace in believing. Wilt Thou therefore minister to us Thine own self? Thou art life, and they that possess Thee have everything that life can give. May the reading of Thy word, may the singing of Thy praises, may the ministry of prayer, may the speech of instruction or meditation of truth all profit our souls in glorifying Thee. We ask for the Redeemer's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

Thou art the eternal God. Before Thee there is none else; no authority higher than Thine; no power like unto Thine; no wisdom that is not borrowed from Thee. Thou art the centre and the source of existence, and we rejoice that we may believe, since in Thee we live and move and have our being, that Thou art full of goodness,

that love is Thy nature, that all Thine administration is for the purpose of infinite love.

We are not wandering in darkness and forgetfulness; we are not cast into the midst of confusions and undirected turmoils of life. Thou sittest regent: all things are naked and open before Thee, and Thou beholdest the end from the beginning. In Thy hand the most complex things are simple; the strangest things to our thought are plain to Thine. Thou wilt restrain the wrath of man, and cause the remainder of wrath to praise Thee; and the things that run adverse, all those causes which conflict in time, we shall behold them from the other side; and in the order of eternity all things shall then appear wise, nothing fugitive, nothing erratic.

It is our joy that we may believe thus in Thee, O Thou God of our salvation, that art higher than all men, than princes, than kings: Thou art Thyself the Lord of lords, and the King of kings. All things are beneath Thee, not that they may be trampled down, but that Thou mayest look benignantly upon them from Thine infinite excellence, from the height of Thy glory, and conserve them. We believe that it is in Thine heart to bring forth unspeakable good, transcending far the measure of our thought or any tracing of our imagination. Nor do we desire to guide Thee by our thoughts, nor prescribe in our own feeling the way that Thou shouldst come. We simply desire to look up and adore—to believe, to trust, to love, to obey.

O Lord, when we look upon the face of things, and attempt to judge Thee by sight, how quickly are we rebuked by the darkness and the confusion of our own minds!—even the things most familiar to us deceive us, even the things most common are inexplicable. All the ways of life are convoluted; all the affairs of men are

liable to such disasters and apparent minglings, that we cannot understand the course of things. We read Thy providence in the history of nations with amazement; we behold the current affairs of life with awe and wonder; and if we were to establish our faith in the destiny of man, in the perfection of the race, in the growth of truth and purity, on that which has been and that which is, how shall we falter at every step! We must live by faith and not by sight.

We rejoice that our God is so great, that it is no impeachment of our wisdom to say that we cannot understand His ways. If Thou wert to be understood easily, then Thou wouldst be but little more than a man; and as Thou art the God of the universe and the Father of ages, and we desire to understand our relative place, and to know that Thou art moving upon the spheres of eternity, and not upon the lines of this globe and of our eras of time, we desire to take Thee as the Lord God Almighty, comprehensive over all conception, endless, dateless. Before we can send back a thought, Thy government was supreme; from periods beyond all conception, Thou still wert the eternal God; and to the end Thou shalt be for ever unfolding by Thy works what Thou art, for ever endlessly creating and sustaining and never exhausted.

And we desire, O Lord, to be so in sympathy with Thee, that we may hold on for ever with Thee, though born of yesterday never to die. We rejoice that we are to be Thy children and of Thy household, and that no disaster can come to us so long as Thou art supreme. "No weapon formed against Thee shall prosper," Thou sayest unto Thy people, and we believe that it is so, and that it shall be so; and while we cannot understand the history of Thy church upon earth, nor fully comprehend

the history of nations, nor understand the providences of the times in which we live, nor the influences that are operating upon human affairs, we do understand that Thy kingdom may be established in every heart, and that while there is confusion without, peace there may be within; and while we cannot understand Thee on the earth, we can understand Thee in our own souls.

And now, we beseech Thee, that every one of us may attempt to build up the world, by building so much of it as lies in our own character, in our own development. May we feel that it is ours to put one more fair stone on the walls of Jerusalem on earth, and thus aid in perfecting this growing structure. May we, therefore, become more conscientious and equitable, more pure and moral, more truthful and truth-loving; may we be clothed with love as with a garment; may we have an active and vital sympathy with Thee; may we learn to discern Thy ways by a holy intuition. May we know what is right and what is wrong among disputed things; never seek to be less than that which is already believed to be right, but always strive to overmeasure and rise to yet nobler conceptions of rectitude. May we make justice more just, purity more pure, and love yet more refined; and may we never seek to shield ourselves by excuses, nor to hide behind weaknesses, and variously explain delinquencies.

We pray that Thou wilt remember every one of Thy people before Thee in their special and common wants. Be near to those that are passing the last days of their lives upon earth, that are glorifying God with the going down of their sun. Let them compose their minds with peace and with joy, and grant that they may by anticipation take hold of the rest which remaineth for the people of God; and we pray that their testimony and

example and encouragement to the young, may be such as to make them evermore examples and leaders in the host of God.

Remember those upon whom are the burdens of life. Oh, make them rest who carry the yoke; and those who are in the midst of suffering, and who from day to day are vehemently exercised with various duties, may they be strong in the Lord, diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. May they learn how to serve Thee by their daily duties; may they know how to look upon their secular affairs as a part of that which God requires at their hand; and may they be in the discharge of those things so imbued with justice, with truth, and with love, that it shall be a perpetual religious service. Thus may they never have occasion to pass from the sanctuary to the world, but may the world itself become their sanctuary, and their altar everywhere, with their God for ever present with them.

We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt look upon those that are growing up into life and are beginning now to take hold upon manhood. Oh, let them make no fatal missteps, lest they be dashed in pieces from the very beginning; let them not listen to false teachings; especially may they not listen to their guilty passions, or be misled as to faith and truth by the suggestion of corrupt hearts, but may they from the morning of life be consecrated in all truth and honour to the cause of Jesus Christ. May they take care of each other, and may the young care for the young. Bless, we beseech Thee, our children. Thou hast made us to know many things by reason of them; they have taught us more than we have ever taught them.

We thank Thee that thus Thou hast opened our hearts to know the great things out of Thy law of love;

that Thy word has its perpetual ministry in our household, and that Thou hast united us together as husbands and wives, parents and children—that in our own daily versatile experience we might understand the word of God to us who are the children of God, of God who is the Father of every living creature. We pray that Thou wilt help us to rear our children as God would rear us, teaching and taught, receiving from them much by their silent example, and yielding much to them by our own example. May we be faithful to our trust; may we not be misled to weakness through overfondness of affection to them, but may our love be chastened; may we learn to take them in the light of the eternal world, and behold their immortality even in their infancy.

Sanctify the family; and grant, we beseech of Thee, that it may be a gate of heaven to every one of us. Bless us in our association one with another; may we have more and more noble conceptions of the relations of friendship. May we every day cleanse and purify ourselves from all the vulgarities, from all the selfishness, and from all the meanness to which we are liable by our contact with this world. May we get higher conceptions than those which we have of duty one towards another, and of all the duties of affection and of true friendship. May there spring from the heart of Christ in the heart of every one of His children more and more nobility of purpose, more and more heroism of conception, more and more manliness of life.

Are there any that are looking wistfully into this sanctuary? are there any that do not believe the things that make us supremely joyful? O Lord, we beseech Thee that they may understand, not by the power of reflection, but may they be taught that true wisdom is in experience, and may they seek the things that are

pure as God interprets purity—things that are wise as Thou dost interpret wisdom—things that are generous, noble, and good; and from some experience in these things may they begin to learn their truth, and so through the realizations of love may they come to the conceptions of truth. And we beseech Thee Thou wilt fulfil Thy kind designs and purposes towards all mankind, hastening the day when men shall have their reason so high that they may cast off prejudice and selfishness and all that is hateful and divisive; and may all the earth begin to find the drawings of love; and all men begin to help mankind. May all the earth begin to bear witness that God is coming in His final power to give ripeness to the race; and may all things that are offensive, and selfish, and proud, and hateful, and cruel, begin to sink in power, and all things that are refined in wisdom, goodness, love, and purity, begin to gain front and strength.

Oh, hasten, Thou that from on high art the God of battles, not of clashing battles of steel and iron, but Thou that dost contend in the heavens and upon the earth, and round about the universe, in that great and universal conflict between good and evil,—make haste that the final glory may be consummated, that the earth may rest as a ship long tempest-tossed and not comforted—rest when at length it finds its peaceful harbour. Oh, bring this world at last to the bosom of Christ, and there may it find that anchorage and peace which it has so long sought in vain in its course. And all the glory of this victory, and all the glory of our own salvation therein, we will give to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

PRECIOUSNESS OF THE SABBATH.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

We implore Thy blessing, our heavenly Father, that all the things which we do in Thy house may be divinely inspired and guided. Open Thy word that it may be as the opening morning upon the night, that the clear shining may drive the darkness of our worldly thoughts and cares away. Touch our hearts that all that is within us may rise up and rejoice this morning before Thee. May we be inspired with a spirit of union, and find it easy to say, "Our Father." Aid us while we sing together, in fellowship one with another and in worship of Thee. Help us to speak from Thy truth and to accept its exposition. Help us in the worship we offer Thee in the silence of our thoughts or in our social relations at home. Bless this Sabbath day wholly, in all its parts and in all its blessed joy and pleasure. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

We beseech Thee, O God, to shine upon us with that divine light which illumines within, which gives thought and affection, and power to seize upon higher truths; for we are living in a world which touches us on every side through our senses and by the senses, and we need to have the power of God to develope that faith in us by which we shall recognize the truth that does not belong to ourselves.

It is good for us, O Lord, that Thou hast cast this island in the stream, and builded the Sabbath all around wherein we stand and are secure. No sound of secular occupation disturbs us; we are at rest. And now we lift up our unwonted thoughts into themes which the week disallows, and have leisure of meditation, and can draw very near to Thee and abide under the shadow of Thy wing. Now we are no longer chafed and fretted by care; we are no longer heated by rivalries one with another; we can look out as from a window and see the storm of worldly things out of which we have come, and pass judgment upon them, and measure again our thoughts and our joys,—yea, search into the deep places of our heart and know our own selves before Thee.

Now we stand in the sanctuary, and we can measure all things by the golden reed thereof. We are permitted to judge now what is the real worth of pleasure; we are permitted now to judge as before God all the various experiences of affection. Thou dost now make it possible for us to pass the line upon all our worldly avocations, and see them somewhat as we shall see them in the judgment. And Thou dost with attraction draw our earliest affections up; now Thou art revealing to us Thy reconciled face; now Thou art making Christ Jesus to draw very near, the chief among ten thousand, the One altogether lovely. Now Thou art interpreting to us His faithfulness, His patience, His wonder of gentleness; Thou art already breathing upon us the spirit of adoption, and our hearts begin to repeat that sacred name, OUR FATHER, and we rejoice in this precious property of Thee. All things are ours since Thou art ours; and we rejoice that we are so comprehended in Thee that we need not look for reasons of our salvation to any merit in ourselves, to any reason

within us why Thou shouldst regard us. We are poverty-stricken, but Thou findest in the royalty of Thine own nature reasons of loving by which we are buoyed up and saved; so that we pray for mercy for Christ's sake, since in Him is fulness of generosity, of love unquenchable and unfathomable—the height and the depth, the length and the breadth whereof surpass all understanding.

Indeed, we cannot understand why Thou, O sacred heart, shouldst love us, and what is the nature and royalty of God that can love unlovely things, and what is the nature of that Being before whom ages pass leaving neither weariness nor marks, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever—unchanged and unchangeable. We cannot understand the fulness, though we do perceive somewhat of the glory, and we rejoice in it, and we glory in our God. We glory not in our own strength, nor because wealth has increased, nor in earthly honours and pleasures, nor because we have builded our house and stored it full and substantially withal; we glory not in men's opinion, nor in all the fruitions of human enterprise.

We glory in the Lord. It is, O God, in Thy strength that surrounds us; it is in Thy thoughtfulness that never misses an opportunity of good; it is in Thy faithfulness, new every morning, fresh every moment, and more in number than the drops of the morning dew. We rejoice in the wonder of Thy heart, that hath taught us to love, and that shall teach all created things yet to love. We rejoice in Thee, and glory in Thee, and are strong in Thee, and are weak only when we forget Thee and go back to trust ourselves. And now we beseech Thee that we may not pervert this precious truth of our dependence upon Thee to supineness, indifference, and indolence. May it rather inspire us with a more hearty courage and resolu-

tion of activity. Since Thou wilt work in us to will and to do, may we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

If there are any in Thy presence, those that are in fear and trembling, Thou, O God, canst quiet the quaking heart as easily as Thou dost the storm and the rushings of the waves. All things are possible with Thee. We beseech of Thee to take to Thyself to-day the unquiet, the disturbed, those that suffer in mind, and speak those words of consolation to them which they need; for Thou knowest who suffer from long depression, who suffer from the vexatious burdens of secular things; Thou knowest who seem to themselves unfortunate in life, cast out and neglected,—those whose purposes are crossed, and whose very aims and ends of life seem to them subverted. Thou canst make them feel that they are dear to Thee, and that they possess Thee—that in Thee they have all joy and all wealth.

We beseech Thee that Thou wilt draw near to those that are in trouble, that they may not be alarmed by it, nor think that any strange thing hath surprised them. May they behold themselves initiated by their sorrow into the true brotherhood of the great human family; yet may they perceive that they are united to Christ, the head of men and the captain of salvation, made perfect through suffering; and may they rejoice to have suffering, if through its ministration they may learn more and more of faith, of patience, of hope, of submission, and of love.

We pray that Thou wilt deliver us from worldly-mindedness, from the contaminations of those things which we must needs handle. Keep us, we beseech of Thee, from growing sordid under those duties which we must needs perform. May we watch our thoughts, lest

we should grow selfish by prosperity. May we seek to walk humbly before God, and not fail to recognize that spiritual connection between Thy thought and blessing and our success; and so may we desire every day to go back from all our outgoings, all our blossomings and fruit-bearings, to Thee that art the root from which we spring.

O Lord God, we pray that Thou wilt bless the young; grant to those that have been consecrated by their parents in the midst of this household of faith, that they may not be forgotten in our prayers. May we pray for each other's households; may we love each other's children; may we have sympathy in the care and burden of their rearing, and help each other; and may we as the Church of Christ remember the covenant implied, the helpfulness and sympathy implied by the offering of children before God in public. We beseech Thee that those who receive the sacred symbol of consecration in public, may not forget what faith their parents have for them; and, as they grow up to years of discretion, may they enter into the blessedness and treasure of Christian knowledge and of Christian life, and become themselves the recipients by faith of the Spirit of God.

May those in Thy presence not depart from the ways of truth in which they have been reared. May they be saved from the power of temptation; may they grow strong by resisting solicitations to evil, and may they grow up in honour, in truth, in simplicity, and Christian manliness. We beseech Thee that they may stand in their day and lot to fulfil the will of God, and to carry forward the work of the Gospel of Christ. We pray that our whole land may be remembered before Thee, Thou that dost look upon the nations of the earth—they are but a very little thing before Thee. How easily canst

Thou raise or allay the tumults of the people ; how soon, when Thou speakest, will the winds fly away, and the waves grow calm. We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt ordain our fate. We pray that there may be so much of conflict and of strife as is needed to work out the righteousness of God among men. Grant that we may be held back from all malign and passionate influences, that we may be restrained, that we may be conscientious and earnest, yet full of love. May we forget no truths in our zeal for any truth ; may we understand the whole will of God, and be kept in the very Spirit of Christ, and do our Master's work in our Master's spirit.

We pray that Thou wilt bless this church. Grant that its members may evermore be fruitful and humble. Let us not be puffed up with a vain prosperity. Deliver us from secular influences. May there be more and more prayer in the membership of this church, more and more faithfulness in Christian families, more and more fidelity in the rearing of their children ; and in their whole estate may they do as Christ would have them ; and finally may they all be accepted of Thee for Christ's sake. Amen.

SECURITY IN CHRIST.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

Our Heavenly Father, we are moved from our hearts to draw near to Thee this morning, and we come to a place whose every thought suggests Thy past mercy; and we are clothed and armed with recollections of Thy grace and bounty—so that we may come boldly and hopefully again. We need, what always we have needed, the inspiration of Thy Spirit, the help which Thou givest to us and to all who need help in spiritual things. May Thy truth, therefore, be a truth to-day, generous to us as God Himself; may all the exercises of worship, whether of prayer or of devout meditation, or of sacred song, be inspired of Thee and welcomed to Thee. Grant, we pray Thee, that everything which we shall do for instruction, may be guarded from error and quickened to truth, and may it be pleasant to us to meet each other in the sacred precincts of Thy temple. May we find our affections purified and our whole souls refreshed by being this morning with God, which mercies we ask in the name of Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

We adore Thee, our God, and worship before Thee. Our hearts acclaim Thee God; sovereign not alone in heaven and over the earth, but over us, by our wish. We rejoice that Thou art supreme, and that there is a law to which every one of us must give obedience,

framed in perfect wisdom and maintained in perfect goodness. And now, we would walk thereon safely as upon a highway cast up; a way upon which the ransomed of the Lord shall walk. And when by wickedness or by sin we stumble thereon, Thou, O God, in Thine infinite mercy and kindness, wilt lift us again and plant us upon our feet; and we shall, by the strength of God, endure to the end and finally be saved.

This morning we rejoice that we are here, that we are permitted to lay aside for the time those duties of the world, and such occupations as divert our minds and carry us away from things spiritual and invisible. No more are we borne down by this outward and physical world, which dominates us so easily through sounds and sights and varied occupations; we are permitted to rise up easier than birds from out of forests do. Our thoughts lift themselves up and go, not wandering, and yet singing towards Thee. We know the divine attraction; we are taught of the Spirit to say out of the heart's thoughts and feelings, "Our Father," and that word is the gate of heaven; and when we speak it, behold the gate stands open, and God is ours, and we are Christ's and He is God's, and we enter in and have fruition of invisible blessings.

We had hitherto taken Thee as the Saviour of sinners, and pledged that we would renounce transgression and turn from it; and yet, how have we violated every promise, and made ourselves even worse than by our original transgressions! But Thou art infinite in mercy; Thou lovest to do good to us undeserving, and dost build up Thy glory, in this very estate of magnanimous mercy; and we rejoice that there is in Thee more than a match for all the thoughts of guilt, all the fears of guilt, or all the transgressions that inspire hopelessness.

We rejoice, blessed Saviour, that Thou dost appear before God for us. We are not unknown in heaven; we trust the names of many are in the Lamb's book; we believe that we are recognized as children, though absent from our Father's house. Do they not think of us who are in charge as ministering angels? do they not think of us whom we once thought much of, guiding and leading and teaching? The taught are our teachers now; they that were beneath us are risen above. And are we not known of those whose hearts are of ours, whose lives were of ours, and whose companionship has been with us here upon earth, whom yet again we shall meet in fulness of joy? Are we not known, O Thou that didst bear us upon Thy suffering heart, Thou that hast clasped us often for rescue and released by Thine own wounded hand, Thou that hast remembered us in Gethsemane, and upon the cross? Shall any of us be forgotten of Thee, Thou that art wondrous in remembering? Thou that didst love us while yet we were enemies, canst Thou forget, or shall we be unknown where Thou dwellest?

We entreat that we may make our calling and election sure, and that by an humble faith, by a persevering following of Christ, by a fulfilment of all Thy claims, which are easy and most reasonable. We beseech of Thee that we may not merely have the promise of that rest, but may none of us come short of it through unbelief and disobedience, and fall in the wilderness and perish; but by Thy Holy Spirit wilt Thou shield us, delivering us from temptation, and in temptation standing by us to deliver. Withdraw our thoughts from evil, save us from that despondency which overtakes the transgressor in his way, and grant, we beseech Thee, that we may have all the fulness of the work of grace

wrought in us by Thine own good Spirit. We confess our unworthiness of Thy care; we confess that our transgressions have merited punishment beyond our thought. If Thou hadst lifted Thyself up in Thine infinite purity and disdained our wickedness; if Thou hadst walked over us and submerged us beneath our own way and wickedness, Thou wouldst have been just and we could not have replied; but Thou hast had mercy, and Thou lovest mercy, and we are alive because of Thy grace and not because of our own. We rejoice to believe that the same power that has been the author, shall be the finisher of our faith, and that Thou wilt not begin a work of grace without carrying it on until the day of redemption.

And now we desire, O Lord, to strengthen each other, and to comfort each other, to bear to others the tidings of that ransom and that Ransomer, to make mention of the grace of God to us, that it may redound to His honour and glory in others. We beseech of Thee, on every side, that we may be the preachers of Christ, that we may not stand in our own virtue, honour, or principles, or upon our own merits, proclaiming our own morals. Grant that Christ may be our joy. May our strength be in Him. May this be the teaching of our lip and the thought of our heart, and this the very argument as it is the secret strength of our life. And on every side, amidst our children, among our friends, and wherever we go with strangers, may we carry the light of Christ, and bear witness to His faith, to His power, and to His redeeming mercy, so that many souls shall be quickened, many encouraged, many redeemed and saved with an everlasting salvation. And the glory be given to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.

SUCCESSIVE GENERATIONS OF BELIEVERS.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

We thank Thee, Thou that art risen from the dead, and ascended to life evermore, and giving life to all Thine own, that we have received life of Thee. That life which Thou hast granted us through nature is Thy gift; but that other and nobler knowledge and life which comes by Thy grace transcends all gifts of nature and of Providence. And for that life of the soul we render Thee, this morning, thanksgiving and praise. Thus born of God, may we worship Thee, who art a spirit, in spirit and in truth. And as we are speaking and hearing Thy word, and engaged in the songs of Zion, give us a spirit of prayer, and may all the sacrifices which we shall offer ascend acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

O God, Thou hast illumined the morning. While yet it is dark, it is light. We rejoice in the potency of that word by which Thou dost bring forth into communion and power the holy thoughts and triumphant experiences of so many souls. We are witnesses of Thy resurrection power. We are witnesses that that Spirit which gave life once, is giving life still and abundantly and universally. How many hast Thou already set free!

We go back in thought from age to age, and trace the course of Thy struggling Church, for which we give Thee devout thanks. We go back to the days of its beginnings and feebleness, and we find Thee there, rescuing from fear, from sorrow, from trouble, and from the domination of the world, those who since, through long ages, have dwelt with Thee in glory. So long are they in heaven that, were it not for the endless gratitude of love, they might have forgotten that they lived upon the earth.

Behold how, through the long, struggling ages, Thou hast not left Thyself without a witness and a people; and Thou hast still a witness in Thy people to Thy power both to forgive sin and to deliver the soul from it. More than we can remember, thousands and tens of thousands, thousands upon thousands innumerable, filling and still augmenting the vast multitude; more than the stars, or the sands upon the sea-shore, are they who by faith of Christ have subdued the world and triumphed over it, and mounted to glory. In heaven they know Thee, and are known. They are Thine own beloved ones. Forth from Thy soul issues that glorious welcome of love which for every one is food and inspiration. With Thee companionship never grows dull; with Thee love is perpetual and for ever new. It neither wastes, nor expires, nor grows old, nor knows weariness or shadow of turning, but is sweeter with every growing year, and more full of wondering transport, ministering to whatever is noble and divine in the soul. And they have dwelt there, augmenting in taste, in love, in all the dignities of purity, and in the transcending elements of the divine life; so that they would not be known by their earthly companions; nor would those that sigh, and pray, and doubt, and fear, and

long, know them to be themselves in their heavenly estate.

And we thank Thee that that number of redeemed ones is augmenting still; we thank Thee that it is a heaven with room for all that the earth can ever send thither; that there is a place for every one which none other can take. We thank Thee that there are garments and palms for every single soul, though it be hoary in years, or though it be an infant of days, though it be washed out from immeasurable corruption, or though it speed without stain or contamination out of life. For all and every condition there awaits in heaven a robe, a place, and a God. And there, in that eternal summer; there, in those innumerable joys; there, in that great company of the redeemed, whose robes are washed in blood, and made whiter than the snow; there, in ranks, in cities, in nations, in races, and in multitudes without number, they dwell in holy liberties and in blessed experiences. Inexplicable to us in the world are they.

They are monuments, witnesses of Thy goodness, companions of Thy glory, full of ineffable joy. Nay, we conceive not nor have we the power to conceive of that which shall describe the joy of those that are with Thee in heaven. And it is our earthly joy, though in low measures adulterated, that we have sent thither those that are companioning with Thee. There, are those that taught us. Our parents, revered and beloved, are at rest. There, are our earthly companions—many that forsook us in childhood. We have seen them no more since, but they have seen Thee, and are with Thee for ever. There, are our brothers and sisters, that went away before we could go, having finished their tasks and been called thither. There, are those children, whom with frowns of grief we forbade to Christ, and would not per-

mit to go when they heard His voice, saying, "Come unto me." Mightier was their love and Thine than ours. And though it broke our hearts, they went, and we live to give thanks; and we visit them again in faith, and behold their royalty, and feel that we are not worthy now to touch their shoes' latchet. And there, are those that have been the companions of our manhood, our brothers in toil and labours of love. There, are many that were the founders of this vine and church, and that wrought with us early, and bore the burden and heat of the day, and did not despise the day of small things. They rest from their labours; their works follow them; and they are to-day blessed.

We give thanks to Thee, O Lord our God, our heavenly Father, that when we look through all these that are martyrs and confessors, and apostles, and holy ministers, and saints, and our own kindred, and our children, and those that are dear to us as our own soul, that still we are conscious that, rising above them all, and nobler, and drawing us with stronger love, Thou, the pierced One, dost still stand, saying to us from out of the heavens, "Peace be unto you;" still, to our eye, reaching out the hands that were wounded for us, but are mighty against all our wounds. Thou, Jesus, art our souls' joy and delight. Whom have we in heaven but Thee? There is none upon earth that we desire like unto Thee. We rejoice in Thee. We worship Thee. We follow Thee, and are grieved that our steps are so short and so wavering and imperfect. We strive to know Thee. We mourn the past. We set resolutions and barriers between us and temptation. We call to mind the victories of Thy people of old. We call Thy grace to mind. We call to mind Thy sovereign power, which is working in us to will and to do of Thy good

pleasure. We are as ships upon a stormy sea; rising and falling, we sometimes lose the sight of heaven; but in spite of winds we hold on. Though, as we are tossed and dashed to and fro, we often lose, beneath the submerging waves that roll over us, the sight, yet we do not lose faith. Thou art still our Captain. Thou art our Leader—our triumphant Saviour. Thy death hath settled our life. We shall live because Thou dost; or because Thou hadst power in dying to destroy death, and didst trample it under Thy feet. Thou didst work wondrously, and Thou wast victor. Thou didst come forth, and rejoice all heaven in the anticipation of those victories which were wrought by Thee in suffering, and dying, and rising again, and ever living.

Now this is our faith and our hope: Jesus is risen; and is our Saviour—our personal Saviour. He loves us more than we love ourselves. He understands us better than a mother understands the babe that she nourishes. He knows all our ailments. He knows our sins, our easily besetting sins. He knows every temptation, and every suggestion of the devil. And He has shielded us. About us Thou art throwing Thine arm of protection. Thou art surrounding Thy people with holy influences. Thou wilt never leave them nor forsake them. They shall be victorious. So long as that voice sounds from the heavens, "Because I live ye shall live also," so long we have presage and assurance of final victory. We take up our cross and follow Thee. What is the cross since Thou left it? No longer a burden, but more a staff and a stay to us. No longer is there death in it, but life eternal. No longer wounding, and shame, and disgrace, but honour, and influence, and glory, and immortality. We take it up and we follow Thee. We mourn that it is so slowly that we follow Thee; but we

rejoice that we follow Thee still. And the victory—we hail it; we wait for it. 'Tis better to depart and be with Christ than to live. No matter what are the joys of the hour; what can they be, compared to our Father's house and the soul's home among its brethren in heaven?

And now, grant this day, we beseech of Thee, unto Thy people, a clearer vision than they have been wont to have of that rest which remaineth for the people of God. Cheer Thy disciples. Those that quarrel by the way—teach them better. And may those that fear and doubt find Thee walking with them, and opening the Scriptures to them, so that they shall feel their hearts burning within them. May those that know Thee not, and weep for Thee; may those that look Thee in the face, and think Thee to be the gardener, hear Thee speak their name to them, so that their souls shall abound with consolation; and may they know that it is Christ that they are looking upon. Hold not their eyes any longer; but may they see Him who lives for ever, that they may live.

Wilt Thou draw near to any that have despised Thee, and that still despise? May they see what they are doing. May they know what is the great sin of all their sins in life—that Christ should live, and they be dead to Him. And we pray that Thou wilt arouse many, and that Thou wilt bring them by the way of sorrow and penitence to Jesus, the soul's Saviour.

Bless those that are hearing Thy voice calling unto them as unto little children. May they not be impatient. May they rejoice that Christ hath called them to a whole life of learning. Day by day may they study new fidelities, purity, truth, justice, simplicity, love, and laboriousness in the cause of Christ.

Shield those that are in the midst of snares and

assaults of the evil one. Bless the young. Bless those that are in the midst of life. Bless those that are advancing and coming into the shade and shadow of their days. May all feel Thy presence, and every one have ministered to him, this day, according to his necessity, some portion from the table of Thy royalty.

And grant Thy blessing to rest upon the churches, and upon Thy cause in all this land, and around the world. Fulfil those promises that seem so long to have lingered, and bring in Jew and Gentile, and fill the earth with Thy glory. And to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. Amen.

RICHES OF GOD'S MERCIFULNESS.

AN EVENING SERVICE.

Our Heavenly Father,—we do not draw near to Thee as strangers; we are not aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; we are Thy children; and though we cannot come in justice with claims, yet in the realm of love we do come to claim blessings. We come not with that boldness which they have who are unsullied and have no fear; but we come with that boldness which Thou dost command, that confidence which we have in Thy love to us, that confidence and earnestness which is inspired by a spirit of love in us towards Thee. We beseech of Thee that we may have the manifestations of Thy presence. May we not seem to ourselves as those that speak in the air, but rather as those that behold Thee by the inward sense, and speak to the presence of a loving Father.

Our wants, we scarcely know them, because Thou art beforehand with Thy vigilant love and care. Our troubles, they are oftentimes alleviated in the very coming, or we are lifted up after their first shock out of them, so that before we begin to pray, Thou hast begun to relieve. Thou art always going before; and when we follow Thee, we find our footsteps walking in the path of

mercy. And Thou art always doing exceeding abundantly more than we ask or think; for when we ask for temporal mercies, Thou givest, in addition, spiritual mercies; and as on earth when they brought unto Thee, blessed Jesus, the sick and the lame, Thou didst heal them, and then forgive them their sins, blessing them in their spirit and in their body; so when we ask of Thee for divine kindnesses, Thou art wont to fulfil our petitions, both in the substance and in the spirit. Thou art doing more than we know. Not till we stand in heaven and behold the inheritance, not till we there see the growths of all those things which now we are sowing, shall we know what abundant mercy Thou hast shown unto us.

And now we render Thee thanks for the tenderness and delicacy with which Thou art blessing us. Thou couldst take Thy goodness, and Thou couldst prostrate us with it; Thou couldst so come with kindnesses as to make them burdens. Thou art doing good in ways so gentle, in ways so common to our necessities, that Thy very disposition and Thy manner is itself a blessing. All Thy kindnesses and all Thy assistances to us are wonderful, but Thy *methods* are full as wonderful. Thou art glorious in holiness; but Thou art wonderful in all the methods of Thy thought, and feeling, and administration. Thou dost not sit to control the earth by wide-sweeping laws, which Thou dost touch but at the point of inspiration; Thou art Thyself mingling in universal human affairs. All events are Thy thoughts, and all things are under Thee; and as we can stand in the midst of complicated affairs, serene, holding them all and guiding a thousand intricate things, so Thou, upon the greater sphere, canst behold the flow of time towards eternity; and universal affairs are all simple, and plain, and easy

to Thee. Thou bearest up creation without weariness, and art not fatigued by ages, though Thou slumberest not nor sleepest, nor in any way takest rest.

O Lord, our God, we do feel that we are made honourable by bowing down before Thee; this is our lifting up; this is our exaltation; and when we humble ourselves, and are abased, then most are we lifted up into glory and honour.

We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt draw every one in Thy presence to Thee by Thy loveliness. May Thy goodness lead them to repentance. Wilt Thou help those that are struggling to obtain a nearer view of Thee? There are many that obtain but glimpses and at rare intervals; there are many that complain that they cannot find Thee in Thy word, nor do they behold Thee in daily affairs, nor do there come to them those moods and meditations in which other men find Thee revealed. Now we beseech of Thee that Thou wilt hear the prayer, whether uttered or thought, of such; and as Thou hast a blessing sent forth and never revoked for them that hunger and thirst after righteousness, so grant, we beseech Thee, that they may be satisfied of Thy fulness.

And if there are any that are troubled with doubts, or are baffled, that are driven hither and thither, that come almost to the port of peace, and then with contrary and adverse winds are driven off again, O Lord, we beseech Thee that Thou wilt rise where Thou seemest to sleep. Let them behold that Thou art in the ship, and that they may not be afraid of the elements; speak to them that they may be at peace. Draw near to all those that seem to themselves almost forsaken of God; lift them up out of the lower plain of selfishness in which they judge Thee in relation to the occurrences of life, that they may see that the events of this life do not centre in them or in

their selfish views, but that they themselves are composing a part of the great history in which Thou art administering for the good of all, for each and for all.

May we not sink away and droop into faintness and weakness by reason of Thy dealings with us; may we feel that we are more beloved of God than our children are of us; yea, that Thy regard for us is infinitely greater than our own regard for ourselves. We that are full of selfishness and ignorance, we that are nursed in conceits and follies, we that do not know how to love ourselves wisely and well, how much more are we beloved by Thee that knowest altogether what we are made of, that knowest all our career in time and in eternity! We rejoice that Thou dost administer upon the great circles of Thy wisdom and goodness, and not upon the petty marks which we make for ourselves. Go on and deal with us as Thou wilt: THY WILL BE DONE.

O Lord, our God, Thou dost sometimes bring us to the point of vision where we can see Thee, at least dimly and distantly, and then it is not difficult to say, "Thy will be done;" but we long to wear this spirit as a garment, we long to sanctify common events and experiences by learning to feel that they are of God. We long to know that there is a wisdom under us that is better than our own, that there is a controlling power and a divine love beating like blood through all the veins of life and time. We long to know that all things are fashioned and directed by our Father's hand, so that we may meet every new combination and every change of affairs with the feeling that it is best and wisest because divinely guided. So make it easy for us every day, in everything, and everywhere, to accept the revelations of Thy Providence as the teachings of Thy thought and of Thy wisdom.

We pray that Thou wilt help us in our various situations of life to bear the burdens that Thou dost call us to bear; and though we may ourselves be instrumental in bringing those burdens upon us, Thou art employing them as moral instruments, Thou wilt by them help us in the end. May those that are weak be helped of God, in those troubles that spring from weakness, whether of mind, conscience, or affection. May all those that are in the midst of sickness, of troubles and pain, find Thee a present help in those necessities. May those that are bereaved find that God is an able physician for this trouble; and may those who desire to get rid of their difficulties understand the sweetness and depth of the promise, "My grace shall be sufficient for thee;" and may they more and more find out the sacred lesson of bearing.

May we, O Lord, find strength in enduring things which at first we utterly despised and hated. May we know how to make our lower nature serve faithfully, cheerfully, and gladly, our higher; and in all things may we accept the overrulings of our lower experience, of our physical sensations, of our earthly connections, and of our time interests, in behalf of generosity, magnanimity, purity of life, spirituality, and the hope of God and heaven. And we beseech of Thee that thus we may be led every day as in a Sabbath, finding rest every hour, and everywhere a sanctuary, and our heart a perpetual altar, and every affection sweet incense.

We beseech of Thee for those that are in our midst this morning, strangers to us; grant that they may be made welcome as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ in this household of faith, since they have found here their Father. May we look upon them as brethren, and may we rejoice together in sacred song, in the communion of

the truth, in fellowship one with the other of prayer and of praise. May they feel that in this wilderness of life Thou hast appointed this home for them, this strange place of meeting with their kindred, and may they go hence blessed. May all the desire of all our hearts rest upon every one of them, and may they have the blessing of the Father, Son, and Spirit, and the people of God upon them; and if they are strangers in a strange land, full of home-sickness, remember them and comfort them. O Lord, if they look back to those that they scarcely dare name or think of for heart-yearnings, both sanctify their affection and its affliction, and bless them for whom they desire blessings.

Be with any, native or foreign, who may consider themselves wanderers, that scarcely know father or mother, or brother, or sister, or friends, or kindred, and who account themselves driven as the idle seed in the air of summer. O Lord, we beseech Thee that they may find themselves connected by Christian faith and love with those that are the children of God, and we shall become brothers and sisters to them. Reclaim those that are wandering from rectitude. If any are beginning to step aside, Thou seest it, though no other eye in the universe knows it; there is not one that escapes Thy vigilant gaze. Throw Thine arms of protection around them at the beginning of evil, and turn them back instantly, and give them a firm determination to do evil no more. Rescue those that are gone down apace in the evil way, and bring back those that are nearly helpless and hopeless, and to human instrumentality quite given up.

And we beseech Thee to be with the poor and the ignorant, and with all those that are oppressed by avarice and position. Be with all those that are suffering from the bondage of civil laws and dynasties and

governments; and we beseech of Thee that this race of man, that for so long a time has groaned and travailed in pain, may at length emerge and go forth into the joy, light, and liberty of the children of God; and the earth see Thy salvation. And to Thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

PATERNAL CHARACTER OF GOD.

AN EVENING PRAYER.

We thank Thee, our heavenly Father, that Thou hast not ordained it that they that approach Thee should come with a perfect heart and a perfect utterance; then only those that are ripened in the very light of Thy countenance and in the everlasting summer of heaven could speak to Thee. But what do they need of prayer? Why should they call out who are without temptations, without sorrow, without any weakness, without infirmities and trials? It is those that are tossed below that need to speak to Thee, and if Thou wouldst accept no offering of our lips but a perfect offering, we should be dumb. Blessed be Thy name! Thou dost hear with Thy heart; Thy pity listens, and Thy compassions, that mercy which has spared and spares still, that goodness that loves to find a way of excuse and release and relief, that grandeur of divine paternity and a father's pity for an erring child, Thou hast for every one of us. And we draw near to Thee to-night, encouraged with this thought. Lord, Thou hast taught us in the very first word of that uttered prayer, to say, "Our Father," and in that way to forget the dreadfulness of a monarch's unapproachable augustness.

So we come to Thee as to our Father. We know not ourselves, nor the way of our own lives. In the things where we have knowledge we stumble and fall, but likewise we stumble and fall for lack of vision. We are walking in a strange and unknown world; Thou hast not been pleased to let us see what there is in to-morrow; Thou hast obliged us to steer oftentimes upon the troubled sea amidst tempestuous influences, and we are perpetually falling into trouble by reason of our ignorance or our very limited sight. We thank Thee that Thou dost look upon all this and share what we are, and that we are ourselves under the vigilance and sleepless care of Thine own watching and providence. Thou dost take our thoughts and feelings and their resulting actions, and all of them are compared again by Thee, so that all things work together for the good of them that love God. Thou art not weary with us when we fall by reason of our own sin, which is daily; Thou knowest how to spare that Thou mayest heal. We are ourselves witnesses to Thy sparing mercy; if Thou hadst been just in Thy indignation, as Thou mightest have been, we should have been cut off long ago and no longer cumbered the ground, but Thou hast had mercy, and Thou dost delight in mercy, and those that might justly be cast off from Thy care Thou dost cherish with wonderful patience and love.

O Lord, we thank Thee for Thy kindness, for Thy patience, for all Thy wonderful forgiveness, and for Thy unwearied love that nourishes whom it might destroy. Now we pray that a sense of God's goodness may lead us to repentance; may we not be willing to receive all bounties and requite all ingratitude. May we not be willing that God should surround us with ten thousand mercies unnamed and unmentionable, and that we should

walk amidst them all only to grow more selfish and proud. May we requite Thee according to Thy mercies and goodness, and though we cannot measure with any thought or feeling of ours the bounty of our God, yet may we love Thee, and seek by loving obedience for complacency in us. Turn us to Thyself; let the light of Thine own image shine in us, and behold Thine own lineaments developing in us, and carry on the work until its consummation and our victory.

We pray, O most merciful Father, that Thou wilt have mercy upon those that are weak. We need to be born as little children, and borne with; teach us patience, and teach us how to edify one another. We pray that Thou wilt give light to all that are in perplexity and darkness. Open a way for those that find themselves shut up and know not whither to turn; that seem alone, with none to whom they can go for counsel; be Thou more than friend or friendship to them, and may they feel that there is one ear that always hears and one mind that never forgets. Thou that dost bear time in Thine own heart, Thou that dost wear out the spheres with the freshness of Thine enduring youth, oh, do Thou teach them that Thou art always a refuge and a friend, and an everlasting protector. Are there any declining in life? Do they feel infirmities come upon them outwardly? We pray that as the outward man perishes the inward man may be renewed day by day,* and as they leave in their advance earthly things behind them, may they be to them as those that draw near, after long being upon the sea, to their native land, and all the sweet odours of the earth come forth upon the deep to meet them, and all the mingling influences of growing things open to

* In the presence of the pastor's aged father, Dr. Lyman Beecher.

those that are drawing near to heaven; if they are coming upon the shore in the darkness of the night, may there be a sense of what is coming; may they have foretastes and sweet-wafted influences that shall cheer them and comfort them.

Glorify Thyself in the lives of all Thy people; make them more and more holy that they may be a blessing to men. Deliver them from vanity and ostentation, from spiritual pride, and from all the things that are offensive and untrue before God or men. Make them full of all kindness and gentleness; may Thy people love one another, and so with a spirit of unfeigned love bring on that final day of glory, when all Thy Church on earth shall be one, when there shall be no more divisions, where the heart shall be united and sanctified by the Spirit of God. Wilt Thou hear us in our petitions, and answer us for Christ's sake? Amen.

TRIUMPHS OVER SIN AND DEATH.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

Our Heavenly Father, Thou hast invited us by all the words of persuasion that stand from age to age unexhausted in Thy word; and Thou art inviting us by our own wants recurring every day, and by all the smiling prospects of this morning in which Thou hast sent forth the sun to represent Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, risen with healing in Thy beams. And we draw near to Thee, made welcome by Thy Spirit to rejoice in Thy presence, to receive from Thee those gifts which every hour we need. And now we pray, since Thou hast opened the doors of Thy temple and made us welcome here, that Thou wilt grant us the evidence of Thy favour in the enlivening of all our gracious affections. May we find that our feelings and thoughts and imaginations are lifting themselves up to greet Thee, and bearing witness that Thy Spirit is here. Sanctify to our use Thy word. Bless us in the holy communion of prayer: bless us in singing the sacred song; bless us in our meditation and speaking and listening; bless us here and at our several homes, and may the whole day be a day of advancement heavenward. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

Thou dwellest in light and glory, O our Father; we dwell in darkness; our light has not yet come, and although Thou hast sent some beams to guide us, we walk in the twilight yet, and wait for the Rising Sun of our salva-

tion. Thou art surrounded by the whole estate of the blessed. What are their joys, we know not; what are their glories and dignities, doth not yet appear. We know that we shall never reach the circuit of heaven by our imaginations thereof, and that nothing that is high and noble and pure can be exaggerated. We know that when we behold that which now our mortal and fleshly eye cannot see, it will be more glorious than we have thought; not less. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which Thou hast reserved for them in the blessedness of heaven.

We are glad for those that go, going forth by permission by the door of life and death. We are glad for those whose work is completed; who rest from it; whose life is purified upon this sphere, and begins to blossom in the other. We rejoice likewise for those that remain, whose work being done, they tarry only till Thy convenience sends for them. How many are there whose vacation is at hand, who know that ere long the welcome sound shall come, "Child, thy Father sendeth for thee!" We rejoice that in this company are so many that themselves think not of it. Now is their salvation nearer than when they believed, or than they now believe. We rejoice that Thou art taking from out of the company of sinful men, and from the midst of troubles in this life, one and another into the dear delights of their Father's kingdom. They that sang here are to-day singing more sweetly above. We thank Thee that redeeming power and grace are not exhibited alone in the final consummation and in the uplifting exhibition which Thou wilt make to all the world; Thou art exhibiting day by day, to those that have a heart to understand and an eye to behold, the triumphs of redeeming love. We behold

round about us Thy work beginning, and Thou art showing thyself to be the author of faith.

We rejoice that so many among us are beginning to dawn into the kingdom of God's glory, and into the communion of the invisible world, and into the life that stands upon these eternal and invisible things; and Thou art also consummating Thy work. We behold on every side those who are growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and who are becoming more lovely, in that they are showing to us more and more what Christ is, by their sweet self-denial that glows with all the glories of piety and blessedness, and teaches us how joyful it is to deny ourselves in love for others. By their patience, by their meekness, by their love, by all the things that they do like their Master, they are teaching us of Him. And we thank Thee that there are so many of them, and that Thou hast planted them in so many families.

We thank Thee that Thou hast appointed the Gospel to be preached in so many ways besides the exposition of the letter. We rejoice that Thou hast living epistles borne about in every part of human life, and everywhere declaring the truths of God. We rejoice that even the root is so fragrant and sweet, growing upon the earth and blossoming only in heaven; we rejoice that the very beginnings of gracious affections and true Christian character here are so noble and so satisfying.

And now, O Lord, we beseech of Thee, that Thou wilt make every one of us put before us the glory of Christ Jesus. May we look upon Him as our model; may we take Him as our Saviour; may we rest in Him and receive the power of God through our faith. We beseech of Thee that every one of us may look for the coming of that glorious day of deliverance from sin, and perfection

in holiness. May we live, not only as seeing Him who is invisible, but may the world of glory never be below our horizon, and may it always shine as the guiding star.

Teach us every day to measure the things of this world and of time, by the thought and the measure of thy sanctuary. Deliver us from despondency and doubt, and may we become strong in the Lord. Deliver us from overweening conceit and from vainglory. May we glory in our God; may the life that we live in the flesh be the life of Christ in us; may we rejoice more and more in the nutriment of sweet affections and in all the graces which are brought forth in us by the Divine Spirit. We beseech Thee that not only we may thus live, but may we be able by our affection and sympathy and labour to bring others with us. May every one of us be able to carry with us bright bands of friends, marching together with one step along the same road to the same hope, and to the same forelooking.

We beseech of Thee that we may feel every day that we are growing richer. May we every day feel that age is not deprivation; and that all the signs and tokens which come of weakness—the failure of one sense and another, the weakening of one part of this mortal body and another—are but the premonitions of the striking of the tents in the camp of the wilderness; and may we see in these things but the preparations for going forward to cross the Jordan into the promised land.

May we look less and less wistfully upon the things that are and are taken hold of by our senses; and more and more may we rejoice in the things that are not to other men, and are to us by faith. May we not be afraid for those, around about whom are the everlasting arms, and for whom is an eternal salvation. May we look forth from out of all things, saying undauntedly, "If God

be for us, who can be against us?" and so established and confirmed, may we approve ourselves before Thee and rejoice Thee. Give it to us to make our Father glad; and we beseech of Thee, that thus, day by day, we may live in this divine communion and in the fruition of these spiritual things.

But, Lord Jesus! Divine Saviour! this must be Thy work. To will is present with us, but how to perform we know not. We are very weak, we are very ignorant. The things even which we know, we do not do; the things that are good we do not realize, and the things that are evil we perform; and we exceedingly need Thy forbearance, Thy grace, Thy sustaining help. And this morning we take hold of Thy promises; Thou hast declared that Thou wilt abide with us; Thou hast declared that Thou wilt never leave us nor forsake us. Thou hast sent Thy servants to declare that, having given Thine own life, Thou wilt with Thyself give freely all needed things; and therefore, out of our weakness we lift ourselves up, still crying, Forget us not, O our Father; neither leave us in our sins, nor forsake us in our iniquities, but draw us with sweet forgiveness, with all blessed promises, with all brighter and brighter shining hopes. Draw us towards Thee, and being quickened, may we help each other.

May we not live among our fellows steeling ourselves more and more, and growing harder and harder by the experience of worldly want, but may we grow more and more like God and Heaven; and to the end grow more gracious, helpful, and sweet-minded; and, when at last Thou hast served Thyself by us, may we fall asleep in Jesus and find it no sleep, but everlasting waking in Jesus. And when we stand before Thee to see ourselves, that we are wearing Thine image, and that we

are like unto Thee,—when we stand before Thee at last *satisfied*, after all restlessness, tossings, and yearnings unutterable, to know the full meaning of that word *satisfied*,—we will give the praise of our salvation to the Father, to the Spirit, and to Thee, O faithful Saviour, evermore. Amen.

WE KNOW NOT WHAT WE SHALL BE.

Sabbath Morning.

INVOCATION.

We thank Thee for more mercies than we can number, for Thou, O God, art a Father, and we know that we are Thy children, because on every side we have the tokens of Thy love, Thy patience, Thy care and faithfulness. And we desire to recognize Thee more perfectly in Thy gifts; and since we are weak and Thou art strong, since we are poor and Thou art rich in all excellence, since we are feeble and undiscerning and Thou art clear and penetrating afar off, knowing the end from the beginning, we come to Thee, that we may receive something of Thy fulness, for the promise is that Thou wilt give liberally wisdom and all good gifts to them that ask; and we believe the promise, and we come with unfaltering faith asking Thee to do that for us which we need. Prepare us for the reading of Thy word; prepare us to take from it all the fulness and sweetness of its meaning; prepare us to speak it; and to enlarge and apply its truths to our actual want; prepare us to accept it. Grant us nearness of approach to Thee in prayer; may we take hold, not of the hem of Thy garment but of Thine outstretched hand; yea, peradventure, there be some that Thou wilt take to Thy very bosom like the favoured disciple, that they may rest their head there. Prepare us to sing Thy praises. We rejoice before Thee; we thank Thee that we can sing and praise Thee together in the sweet fellowship of mutual love and of love to God. Help us to approach Thee in prayer: make the way easy, and inspire us with right thoughts and right words; and so may Thy bountiful blessing rest upon the

exercises of the sanctuary, and follow down hence through all the hours of the day wherever they may be spent. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

THOU hast lifted up the light upon the earth and caused the day to know the time of its going forth. We thank Thee that Thou hast also lifted the clear light of the sun upon our earthly way, and hast revealed unto us both the darkness and the light, so that we no longer are dim, as they that dwell in twilight. To us that sat in darkness hath arisen a great light. How short our life is, if we have no life but this! How are we spent before we are ready to begin! How, in all our early need, do we grope for knowledge, and find ourselves possessed of skill, and experience, and some discipline of affection only when our faces are begun to be veiled in age, and we are treading down to the grave!

Our life is too short for much of labour; and since the world began, each man has but thrown his mite into the treasury, nor knew where it went; nor lived to see where it should be placed in the great temple which God builds in time. We are not permitted to live for ourselves, and to say, "Eat, drink, and to-morrow die." We are not permitted to forget that we have powers that should call for our highest exertion, and yet we come so slowly to any skill and power. The period of working is so short, and freighted with so many interruptions, and broken into too many times before it is at all used. We are so like tapers that burn at longest but for the hours of the night, but are blown out by rude winds that strike through at any hour; we are so weak in our individual selves, and they with whom we associate so uncongenial often, that our life seems a strange mockery.

We wonder why we were born into such a fate, and being born, why things were not better—why there was not more impulsion for good, and less drawing towards inevitable evil. And if there was no light but that which our own minds could bring, we could cheer ourselves with but little that would be worthy of a thought, and our life itself would be our sadness; and death good, only as extinguishing sorrow. But now life and immortality are brought to light; now, this whole life is but the grey morning, and not the day itself.

Here it doth not even appear what we shall be. Here we know not our own leaves, nor blossoms, nor fruit. This is not our soil; for, as the things that are sown in the winter, to be transplanted when the summer shall come, do not know their own home, nor recognize what they shall be, confined and shut in; so, we are but being brought forward, to be turned out into full soil and branching room when Thou shalt give us planting in heaven. Now, though we take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth—yea, though we wing ourselves with faith and imagination, and, touched of God with sacred inspiration, go like flames upwards, and think into heaven itself, it doth not yet appear: yea, though we take the sweetest assurances of affection and augment them by the power of our imagination, and surround ourselves with the returning virtues of all whom we loved, with the glorified friendship of those whom our hearts have touched in life, though we kindle on the altar of our heart by imagination all high and generous purposes, it doth not yet appear what we shall be.

We know not our glorified faculties; we know not what this sense of right, this conscience that gropes so darkly on earth, and punishes more than it gives

reward, what it shall mean when Thou shalt give liberty and sweet fruition and comfort of good. We know not, when the tide of God's nature shall roll divine beneficence through our faltering feeling of benevolence, what shall that life be then. We know not, when all our tastes are quickened; when all that is in our worship and rejoicing therein shall have been purified and lifted up, and we ensphered among influences every one of which touches for purity; every one of which, touching with joy and music, rises yet to blessings more and more; we know not what that life shall be in all its amplitude and in all the infinite richness of its details; but this we know, that it will be enough, and that we may well bear the discomforts of life. What to us, now is groping in darkness, who know that the morning shall come? What to us are burdens that seem to crush us to the earth, who know that we shall not go down to the earth? What are sorrows that vex and interfere with the fair pictures which our fancy paints here, who know that we shall be lifted up above all tears which God shall wipe from every eye; and that we shall not walk in terror, despised, oppressed, outcast, pursued with various misfortunes, but in the serene beatitudes of heaven, kings and priests, where the king shall be without power of oppression and the priest shall be without circumscription and limitation; where we shall be sons of God, standing in the joint inheritance with him?

Most precious Jesus, our Saviour, we turn again, we have looked into these things; we take comfort even as watchers that look towards the growing East to go back to our tasks. We will let the day rise, nor trouble ourselves how fast its hours come. We stand in our lot. We thank Thee for our birth. There are no troubles too heavy; there are no cares and sorrows too many; they

are all sent of God. Thou that dost clothe the summer, and take care of the very weeds; Thou that dost permit the things that are noxious to us, but are wholesome to themselves, to grow; Thou that dost take care of all the insects that sing swarming in the endless multitudes of creation; Thou that dost watch for the very birds; Thou that art the lover of the very minutest things, and with vale and mountain dost muse and care for that which Thou dost create; why should we be afraid since we are named with Thy name, since we are marked with the signet of Thy grace, since we have given our life into Thy hand, since our souls are in Thy hands, since we dwell in Thy house, and are consecrated to Thee; why should we trouble ourselves and plough the furrows of distress?

O Lord our God, we beseech of Thee that Thou wilt cause us to be full of joy as we should be; to lift up the eye of inspired faith; to take hold of the hope by which we are to be saved. Grant, we entreat of Thee, that we may walk henceforth more erect; less bent as men that carry burdens; less sordid and more and more stately, for we are dependent upon the care of Him that never will leave us nor forsake us.

Are there any that have come up hither with burdens? Already have they not begun to relax? Let the burden roll off from every shoulder, at the foot of the cross; may they find rest where Thou foundest burdened man waiting, and may we find nothing but lightness and joy. We beseech of Thee, if there are those that are called hither this morning with great trouble of heart, great afflictions, oh, may they find how bright even storms are when the sun can but once reach them; may they know how to take their griefs, though they come like great drops of rain and fall down like showers. Oh, may they

know how to carry all their trouble to Christ; or rather, in the midst of the cloud and darkness may they discern the form of another near them, and feel how rich they are in poverty and sorrow by the side of whom Christ stands.

O Lord Jesus, what wondrous condescension! Oh, what is there in us, that Thou shouldst take such pains to love us; that Thou shouldst be willing to punish us; that Thou shouldst be willing to take the part of father or mother and watch over our outgoings and incomings, reproving us and teaching us the right way; and that with many experiences Thou shouldst enforce Thy rules, still following after us to deliver us from our troubles! How sacred is this care of God over us who deserve nothing; who have no claim; who are less than the least before the mightiness of God; yet how dost Thou make Thyself humble like us to dwell with the heart-broken!

O Lord, Thou art revealed in the majesty of Thy greatness, but more in the fruits of Thy humiliation than anything else to our thought; that Thou shouldst weep with us in our distresses; that Thou shouldst bind up our broken hearts; that Thou shouldst cheer us in the midst of fragmentary hopes; that Thou shouldst make the disasters of this world reflect from so many faces of diamond stones, each face a vision of heaven; that Thou shouldst make us to see in our darkness ten thousand suns shining afar off in the heavens; that Thou shouldst continue Thy way and never be weary, not forgetting more than the mother her sucking child; that this should be God eternal, and everywhere, spreading abroad, filling heaven and overflowing the earth; our God, in whom we have a right, and whom we call Father; who lays sacred hands upon us day by day; who numbers our sleeping hours and watches our waking hours, who is

before us and behind us, and all round about us with thoughts of grace and mercy! Oh, what wealth, what undeserved riches, what grace beyond all conception, is Thine to us!

And now, Lord God, Thou doest not these things for a reward. It is not that we can pay Thee back with glad thoughts and grateful affections, yet, for our own sake may we love Thee, and not to pay Thee anything. Thou art too generous to think of return, for thy grace is a gift, absolute and divine. Oh, may we be unable to think of such things and not have our hearts melt! May there be such honour, may there be something like Thee in us, that shall be touched with all this grandeur of grace and various divine mercy. May we feel after Thee; still calling out in the darkness, as children waking in the night call father, so may we call out for God; and at times, even if we do not hear Thy voice, may there be a form of a hand resting upon us, and that shall be enough; for we shall take hold of it, though it be in the dark, and it shall guide us to the growing light; for the day shall come, and the release and triumph. Therefore, with this firm hope and faith may we now go forward, not caring what men shall do unto us. Ours is God, and we can dispense with everything else; we fear thee, and therefore we fear no other one; we love thee, and are unspeakably rich therefore, though there were no other love for us. We desire, therefore, O God, that we may be upheld in our duties one towards another. Make our households more like an altar, an offering, a church of God.

We beseech of thee, O God, that Thou wilt have compassion upon all those that do not know Thee. Help us to spread the blessings of this Gospel knowledge to those that are without it. Look abroad upon this whole land;

we believe it is Thine; make it a mountain of holiness, a habitation of righteousness. O Thou that dost laugh when kings confer how to despise Thee, when rulers join themselves together, and wicked men make counsel and confederation—Thou that dost laugh at them, and smile upon such in our time that do not deserve even derision in their infinite feebleness—have compassion upon them that seek to make chains stronger than the law of God; that seek to bind those that are already hopelessly crushed; and that seek to make highways of iniquity where God has cast up with sacred enginery the highways of salvation.

O Thou that in justice art full of love, overrule the folly as well as the wickedness of men. Bring forth Thy bright decrees, and let righteousness begin to be glorious in the sight of men, and rebuke every kind of wickedness. May all the iniquities of injustice and oppression, may all the misrule and untruth, may all selfishness and hardness of heart, all arrogance, all avarice, and everything that has opposed Thee, be rebuked both by Thy providence and by the Church of God; and we beseech of Thee that Thine own people may not be the last to recognize the glory of holiness in human affairs, but first and chiefest.

Call forth witnesses, oh, call Thou forth those that shall stand in human affairs for God, and may we be of their number. May every one of us in his place be anxious, and bear witness, not for the truth. nor for himself, but for the God of truth and the cause of God in the Church upon earth. May Thy kingdom come everywhere; may all nations see the salvation of God. The earth hath been stranded, and for want of water hath not been able to go on its voyage. O Thou in whose hands are the floods, send down those waves that

shall lift up Thy ship and give it channel and voyage again; and may the day hasten when all around the earth, in the midst of light and knowledge, the light of virtue and true civilization, in Christianity; when all around the earth among the many-tongued people of this globe,—there shall be but one thought of peace, of gladness, of purity, of justice, of love towards God and towards men, and the word of the Lord fulfilled, that was uttered ages ago and is yet unfulfilled, and the glory of the Lord fill the earth as the waters fill the sea; and to Thy name shall be the praise, now and evermore. Amen.

GOD OUR REFUGE—HEAVEN NEAR.

AN EVENING PRAYER.

Thou, O God, hast made Thyself a refuge for Thy people since the world began, and unto the end Thou art and shalt be a God full of tender compassion. Because Thou art strong, Thou art not forgetful of the weak; because Thou art pure, Thou dost not despise the sinful; because Thou art wise, Thou dost not lightly esteem us in our ignorance; but the boundlessness of Thy nature is addressed to us as a universal supply of our want. Thou dost throw round about us the protection of Thine own being. In Thee we live and move and have our being—and, although at times Thou seemest to forget, Thou never dost forget; and although at times Thou seemest cruel, Thou dost not willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men. Although Thy yoke is harshly placed upon our neck, and Thy burden bound upon our shoulders, what time Thou pleasest Thy yoke becomes easy and Thy burden light.

O God, we bear witness to the bounty of Thy grace and to its sufficiency; as our day hath been so has been our strength. Thou hast ministered to us. Thou hast not taken sorrow away, for then we had lacked grace; Thou hast not taken away from us weakness, for then

we had no longer been human; but Thou hast given Thine own shining self, Thy guidance, Thy infinite patience, Thy sympathy, by which we are drawn onward through all the ways of trouble. Thou hast given us to lean upon Thee. When faint, Thou hast held us up; when fallen, Thou hast lifted us, even as a mother her little child; when wandering alone, it was Thy step that sounded in the wilderness—Thou didst come forth to seek and to save the lost; when famished, Thou hast been the bread of supply and sustenance; when sick, Thou hast been medicine to us and the physician; Thou hast nourished us with a care exceeding all the tenderness of parental love—for what is there that is known under the name of earthly relationship, what depth of love and continuance of it, what variation of love to which men have put names, that is more than a spark that has fled from the great orb of Thy being? Thou art love, and all the fulness of Thy being comes forth to us, Thy children, and in Thee we are strong and safe both now and for evermore. For if we behold Thee, Invisible One, then we can live; if we behold not Thee, then we die. With Thee we are strong for all things, but without Thee weak.

We thank Thee, Thou blessed Saviour, for Thy patience with us, for the gentleness of Thy being, for all the encouragements of Thy word, for all the remembrances which Thou hast caused us to have of Thy faithfulness. We take shame to ourselves for our ingratitude, our selfishness, our pride, our unspirituality and indifference to God. We are ashamed of our fractious disobedience, that we have rebelled again and again; we are not worthy to call ourselves by Thy name, nor to abide in Thine house, nor to be as children in the presence of a father—but Thou hast not heard and

will not hear the word of our renunciation. What time we plead our poverty, what time we come abjectly to ask for the lowest place, Thou dost throw about us the royal robe of forgiveness; Thou dost put sandals upon our feet and a ring upon our hand; Thou callest for the preparation of the feast, and we are received again in the estate of children in our Father's house. We thank Thee that Thou art giving Thy dwelling to every one of us. And now we make mention in the assembly of Thy faithfulness. We praise Thee, we adore Thee, we worship with rejoicing in Thy presence. Our sin has been common, our weakness common, our want and likewise our experience of Thy supernal bounty; and we have a common reason for standing together in gladness to-night. We express a common want in our sinfulness and weakness, and a common gladness in our thanksgiving and praises. Thou hast not dealt with us according as we deserved,—Thou hast caused mercy to abound and superabound beyond our desert.

Our chastisements have been fewer than our sins, and when Thou hast mingled bitterness in our cup, Thou hast still forborne; Thou hast watched our need, ever taking counsel of the generosity of Thine own heart—Thou hast dealt according to the measure that was in Thee, and not according to the measure of desert in us. Our souls are glad in Thee; Thou shalt live for ever, and because Thou livest, we shall live also; and all our way is plain and smooth. We behold salvation waiting for us; we reach over by faith, we take hold of our crown of victory. There remaineth a rest for us if by unbelief we do not forfeit it. Ere long we shall take it. None shall have our crown; none usurp our place; all the flowing in of infinite numbers doth not fill up the

places of heaven. There is room for all; room for us there is and shall be.

We thank Thee that Thou art planting more and more the tokens of its coming. As they that draw near to populous cities see the swelling evidences thereof on every side, beholding the throngs that come and go, all the tokens of thickening habitation, so, Thou art causing us to behold the near approaches to heaven in every day and on every side. The things that come to us and the things that depart from us, the weaknesses showing the giving out of strength and the taking down of the tabernacle,—the dimness of sight, the dulness of hearing, the slowness of motion, the growth of pains and infirmities, the weariness of life itself, the cessation of more active duties,—what are these but signals which Thou art giving to us;—the yearning for rest, the longing for those that are gone out from us, the sympathy with the general assembly and the Church of the First Born,—what are these but sweet and golden cords let down, that are drawing us in Thine own pleasure, and we are drawn of them towards Thee? Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly. Thou art coming—Thou art drawing near to us.

Ay, many of us Thou art warning by Thy very presence in our dwellings; Thou art taking those from out of our midst near to us, Thou bringest them yet nearer to Thee. How can we help seeking God when His bosom is the cradle of our children? How can we but know heaven, when with tears and heart-achings we walk all round about it to seek those that earth hath not any more but in memory; Thou art making the way familiar, Thou art making it joyful. We are following in the path of those that sang and prayed and laboured with us: whom we taught, whom we baptized, whom we led in

life. Behold how numerous and familiar is the population of heaven, since Thou art taking it so much from around about us? Thus Thou art making it easy to die; thus Thou art making it sure that we shall live again; thus Thou art changing sight to faith, which is far better.

O Lord, we beseech Thee that we may not be as brute beasts, nor insensitive to all the dealings of God with us. May we not turn away with a cold philosophy from those events of Thy providence; but may we grow riper and richer and sweeter in affection,—more heavenly in every inflection of our life. Oh, that the work were done and that grace had complete victory! But Thou knowest when, and we do not. We scarcely understand our own life nor its relations at all to the other world; the secret is with Thee. But what time Thou seest we are so tempered, so cultured, so prepared that this dawning of the life of the soul here may effulge and brighten in heaven, then take us there that we may find ourselves when we find Thee, with that life which is hid with Christ in God, then may we appear when He shall appear in glory.

Bless us in our coming together again to-night. We thank Thee for this Sabbath, we thank Thee for past experiences; we would not let die the summer with the going out thereof. We remember how Thou hast comforted us, instructed us, given us growth; we remember all the wondrous mercies that have at other times made our hearts soft and moistened our eyes with tears. We thank Thee for the past, and wilt thank Thee for evermore. We take courage; we believe that Thou wilt be as Thou hast been, only more abundantly, and we will trust Thee. Yea, though Thou slay us, yet will we trust Thee, for Thou art the living God, and all our life pro-

ceeds from Thee. Thou wilt quicken us, Thou wilt uphold us, even in dying; and out of death we shall come forth more alive than ever before.

And now, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that Thou wilt bless not us alone. Remember all for whom we should pray; remember the friends of our youth, our earthly instructors; remember our parents, our brothers, our sisters, all the dear friends that we have on earth; and grant that they may participate in the exceeding abundance and grace of the blessings of our God. We thank Thee that Thou hast sanctified our hearts, so that we can live with the thought of immortality in every throb. We beseech Thee, bless us in the Sabbaths that yet remain; may every one of them be days of transfiguration, unobscured days that we shall behold the eternal city, until at last the Sabbath of rest shall dawn that knows no sun-rising nor sun-setting, the light of which shall be our God; and we will give the praise of our salvation in that eternal rest to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

IN THE CHURCH.

II.—ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

INVOCATION.

Our Heavenly Father! we stand in this place consecrated by ten thousand gifts of grace from Thine hand. We cannot look back; our way is hedged up with mercies, and we stand upon the beginning of another period of time, desiring to take encouragement from the past and to look down into the future with full assurance of faith. Be pleased this morning, Thou that art the Head of the Church and the Father of this household; be pleased to grant that this may be a year made happy, indeed, to every one of us; may ours, we beseech Thee, be all that wealth and benefaction of mercy which is in Christ Jesus; and in the opening services of the day, may we feel that Thou art with us. May disturbing thoughts fly away that the sweet composure of faith and love may steal upon us. May we be filled with holy impulses and begin to spell that divinest name of Father. May we know that Thou art here because we are drawn out to Thee in loving aspiration and holy desire, and may Thy word begin to shine. No longer art Thou the Infant of Days. We come not to Thee as a babe, but as a Prince and a Saviour. Thou art giving gifts from heaven. Grant unto us gifts of grace to-day. Bless all the exercises of the sanctuary; help us every one to receive as from the hand of God, and so to improve as becomes the children of God. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

We rejoice, O Thou that dwellest in heaven, that Thou art not confined in Thy wisdom, in Thy power, in Thy goodness, nor in Thine administration to the hea-

venly host. Throughout the whole domain, Thou art the living God, and Thy wisdom and Thy power are felt wherever Thou hast created. Nor art Thou ever weary of Thy work, and the least thing that had the sovereign touch of life remains for ever before Thee, and all the wants of all the creatures that Thou hast made rise up before Thee for perpetual supply. Thou givest liberally; Thou art inexhaustible in Thy nature and resources. We cannot, by searching, find out the nature of such an One, that dwells in unslumbering care, that knows no variableness nor shadow of change, that outlives the passing generations of men, Himself never old, for ever young; full of goodness. And yet it is not so strange that Thou shouldst be so, though we cannot understand the fulness thereof as that Thou shouldst be a God of such tender mercy, a God of such divine love. We cannot understand how Thou couldst bear us and carry us with such longing affections, and find in us reason for Thy love; how Thou canst see that which is desirable in the midst of so much pride and selfishness, so many passions, and the hurtful ways to which they give rise. This is the wonder and the love of Christ to sinful men. The mystery hid from ages is an unsolved and unfathomable wonder yet; but we rejoice in believing that it is so, and that the divine grace of love that fills the heavens is to be the salvation of the earth. This is our hope.

It is not that we are strong nor wise, but that Thou art all this for us. It is Thy righteousness and not our own that surrounds us; it is Thy love to us rather than the love which we have to Thee that encourages us; it is Thy faithfulness and not our own perseverance that lays the foundation of our courage. We trust in God who is all in all, for Thou art, O Blessed One, first and

last, including all between; Thou art Alpha and Omega, and the whole alphabet. All grace and mercy and truth is in Thee; and we rejoice in Thee, not in ourselves,—not in man, not in institutions of religion, not in anything that is upon the earth. Oh, we rejoice in Thee, that art the fountain of all excellence, the Father of mercies, and the God of all grace and goodness! We have had abundant occasion to prove Thee, and have put Thee to proof, and we bear witness that Thou art He that doeth exceeding abundantly more than we ask or think. Thy promises are never so large as Thy performances, Thou art beforehand with us; and when we think that we are walking in a desolate way, behold the footstep of God is before us; Thou hast been there and prepared our way.

We rejoice to find Thee on every side of us, and to find that our life is hid in Thee; the secrets of it, the duties of it, and the duration of it, are of Thee. We rejoice that we have such a friend,—so gentle, so patient, so persevering. And this is the wound and the shame of our sin, that it is a disobedience and an unwilling service to One so gracious and so full of all noble excellence. We are ashamed when we reflect how little we have requited Thy love with our love; Thy reasonable command with our filial obedience; we have sought each one his own way; we have had our own will and purpose aside from Thine and contradicting Thine. O Lord, we are unworthy of Thy name or of Thy favour; we only plead Thy grace, saying, "God be merciful to us, sinners."

And now Thou hast completed the mercies and the history of another year; Thou hast advanced us to the first day of this year upon which we are entering. We would call upon our souls and all that is within us to

bless and to praise Thy name for the goodness of the year that has gone. Our record of it may have been of sin; our record of resolutions broken; our record of time misspent, of powers not legitimately used but turned aside against our secret convictions, against our own consciences, against the call of God's voice in us—powers not employed to their vast purposes and to their highest ends.

Our record is indeed sadly blotted; and tears and sorrows, hopes not fulfilled, and aspirations not met by any adequate realization, fill our remembrance; all on our side is human, weak, and wicked. If we look only to the year as we have marked it, it is not a year to be remembered nor sighed after as something to be brought back again; but when we look at Thy way with us, it is a year robed in mercy, growing with every day, and waning not one single hour. Thou hast made it a year of divine love, of pardoning mercy, of gracious guidance. Thou hast held us up and carried us in Thine arms even as a mother carries her little child. Thou hast counselled us; Thy rod and Thy staff they have comforted us; Thou hast whispered to us in the hours of dulness and discouragement; Thou hast inspired us in our wayward moments, and brought us back again by ten thousand tokens; Thou hast showed Thyself indeed a guiding God and a Father.

We thank Thee for the ministration of the year. It has passed and gone to the judgment, and hangs there waiting our coming—a record that we must yet again know and read. And now we beseech Thee, O Lord God, by the patience which Thou hast manifested, by the gentleness which we have proved, by the grace which is revealed of Thee, and by all that is of goodness in Thyself, we beseech of Thee, take charge of us for the

year upon which we have now entered. We are strangers to it; we do not know one single path; we are pilgrims, and wander up and down in our several ways. Thou only seest the light and the darkness alike; Thou only seest the end from the beginning. Thou alone art perfectly wise, and all things are in Thine hands for merciful administration.

We commend ourselves and families to Thee for the year upon which we are entering; and we beseech Thee that Thou wilt be gracious to us in our ordinary estate. If it be Thy rich pleasure confirm to us life,—a life of labour and usefulness. Bless us in our households; bless us in our social relations, and all our affections, and to one another, and sanctify our love; make it purer, nobler, and more heavenly. Bless us in our several secular duties. May we go abroad into all the relations of this life, carrying the savour of the Gospel with us, sanctifying whatever we touch, bearing about the name not only, but also the disposition of the Lord Jesus.

We beseech Thee that Thou wilt bless us in our individual experiences. Some Thou art just calling out of darkness into light, and they are this year being bathed with new hopes. Be gracious to them, and sustain them, that no trouble may overtake them mightier than their strength; that with every temptation they may have rescue; and that they may know that they have entered this year with God the Father for their guide, Christ for their Saviour, and the Holy Spirit for their enlightener and sanctifier.

Confirm those that have been already some way advanced in the divine life and have had occasion to prove Thy mercies. We beseech of Thee that they may not be discouraged, nor turn back, nor refuse to bear will-

ingly such burdens as are needful for their culture. May those that have been for a long time in Thy service and are ready to lay down their burdens, have still that same nourishing care which has never left them from their cradle until this day.

We beseech Thee that they may already taste that heavenly joy which is so soon to be theirs. Thou hast taken from us not a few during the past year; they rest from their labours; they are divided by the sense and by the flesh from us that we cannot see them nor speak with them any more; but they are not divided from us in faith, nor in love, nor in joy. We tarry yet a little longer; Thou art translating this Church, Thou art augmenting the ranks of those in the heavenly state that are glorified. Oh, we thank Thee that so many departing leave behind the savour of a holy life and the testimony of a triumphant death! We are comforted as we draw near, believing that the same grace that gave them victory, will give final release and victory to us. We beseech thee, if there be any of us appointed unto death in the year on which we have entered, may we not be afraid. May we know what is the meaning of that sound—*death!* may we always hear the word *Christ* when it is pronounced; may we know that it is but that divine presence calling us home; and may we feel every motion of death to be but the throbbing of the heart of God. May we long to depart to be in his bosom.

If any are sick, wilt Thou graciously sustain and comfort them; visit them with Thy salvation, and make today their sick-chamber to be as light as the temple of God. May they feel that Thou art present, and may their joys be as choiring angels to them; and may they have occasion for thanksgiving even in their sick-chamber and in their hours of seclusion.

Be with those that belong to us who are far away. Wherever they may be to-day, may it be a Sabbath—God's rest in their souls. If there be any present that are strangers among strangers, cause all heart-sickness and home-sickness to fly away quickly as they are in the presence of God, of Christ Jesus, and their brethren. May the joy of Thy house banish all sad thoughts, and here may they renew their strength; here may they taste the bread of life; here may they renew their covenant, and here may they see that this is a gate of heaven. Be with us in the things we ask for, and wilt Thou do for us all that we need? And Thine shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

RETURNING FROM THE SUMMER

Sabbath Morning

INVOCATION.

Thou that art love, Thy works do manifest Thee. Every hour comes laden with Thy blessing. We are ashamed to ask Thee for mercies as if Thou needest to be entreated. Thou knowest, before we ask, what things we have need of; and therein is Thy condescension, and Thy great mercy, that Thou dost make it so pleasant to us to come, and so needful to our connection with Thee and our joy through Thee, that even the things that are inevitable come better when we have asked them at Thine hand; and Thou makest those things special gifts to them that ask, that otherwise would come as diffusive bounties. Be pleased, then, this morning to accept us, as we come to recognize Thee as the source of all our good, our life, and all the springs of our daily joy,—our hope in the future. O Lord, what is there in us; what hope we for in time or in duration that is not quickened by Thee? And now, this morning, grant unto us this chiefest of blessings,—such a disclosure of Thyself that we may see that Thou art the great all in all; and that we may recognize our relations to Thee, and love Thee and adore Thee and praise Thee. Bless the reading and the interpretation of Thy word, bless us in the songs we shall offer; bless us in our communion of prayer and fellowship therein; bless us in every exercise of the day at home. May our houses be as sanctuaries of God; and may it be a heavenly day in all its parts and experiences to us. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

WE draw near to Thee, Thou that art the fountain of all good, the source of all blessing: not because we feel the pressure of want so much, for the abundant mercies of Thy providence have made us almost unconscious of outward want. It is not for us to say, "Give us this day our daily bread," for our loaf fails not. Thou art so surrounding us, Thou art so enriching us, Thou art so making Thy mercies intrusive, that we continually have more than heart could wish. And yet the best gifts are unsanctified, and have lost their best flavour and pleasure, if they do not bring Thee to us. It is not so much the things which we have, and those we love, as the love which they mean that gives us joy; and it is Thy blessing upon blessings; it is Thy thought upon the things we daily need and have, that makes them seem to us inexpressibly dear. We rejoice in the very earth itself, because it is Thine; we rejoice in all the things that live and grow, because they were Thy thoughts, and because they are the objects of Thy care. What is dear to Thee becomes dear to us; and what concerns Thy thought and Thine honour and Thy glory, concerns us most intimately. And we draw near to Thee this morning, more expressly to thank Thee for our immortality; that we have a heritage which is worthy of our paternity, knowing that we bear within immortal spirits. May we be satisfied with nothing that shall not have in it something of immortality. While we partake of the pleasures of life and the duties of to-day, may we stretch infinitely beyond all these things, and hold in full survey the grandeur and the glory of that estate which is reserved for Thy people in heaven. Oh, grant that we may not sell our birthright for a mess of pottage; grant

that we may not be bribed of our heavenly estates by the pitiful bribes of wealth, or bewildered by the fantasies of honour, or any of the sources of pleasure: but grant, we beseech Thee, that we may live in this life with a constant sense of sympathy with the life that is to come; and that it may be more and more real to us, that it may be brought nearer and nearer, that out of it may be ministered food for the soul, bread for the hungry, and the water of life for the thirsty.

We beseech Thee to bless us this day, gathered together after the separation of the summer; Thou hast permitted us a church, a pastor, and a people, again to be united in exercises of devout worship before Thee. We thank Thee for all the mercies that have befallen us; we thank Thee that we come again in common faith of Christ Jesus, that we have fellowship of joy, of faith, and aspiration—that we travel the same path for the same blessed heaven. May this common relation which we bear Thee sanctify our affections; may we feel our oneness in Christ Jesus.

Wilt Thou bless the experience which each of us has had, the individual history and experience, and all the collective experiences of this congregation? Where Thou hast brought sorrow, be pleased also to bring consolation. Where Thou hast set up before any visibly the power of mortality, there reveal the glorious truths of immortality. Where Thou hast given joy and gladness, sanctify it; where Thou hast brought disappointment and losses, sanctify them. Grant, we beseech Thee, that everything of every kind may be held consciously as from the hand of God, and may it bring with it a blessing. Whether Thy mercies come in light or in shadow, whether they are of the day or of the night, may we accept them as from God, and so inevitable blessings.

Unite us together more and more in the work of the Gospel. We feel that our sun is setting, our day is shortening; that which we do, we must do quickly; the night cometh when no man can work. Grant, then, that we make haste, that we may chide every idle way; that we may unite with more fervent purposes, more earnest zeal, purer love, and devouter faith in God, to establish in our day that part of Thy work on earth which may here fall to us. May Thy Gospel be preached with more simplicity, with more direct earnestness, and may it bring forth more abundantly than it has formerly, the fruit of the Gospel. Grant that this church may be reared up more and more to be a praying church, a labouring church; may it be sanctified, and weaned from pride and worldly ambition. May it be established in the faith of the Gospel of Christ; and grant that to the end of our lives we may thus serve Thee; and when, at last, the summons shall come to us, may it not be the surprise of sorrow, but rather of joy, and may we hear in the voice of death the call of God, "Come up hither!" May we find at last our home; and find there, safe and glorified, awaiting us, all that have been called from our side, all whom we have loved and lost. And may we find them again with eternal salvation, and there, ourselves safe, we will cast our crowns before Thee, and give all the praise of our salvation to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

THANKSGIVING DAY.

INVOCATION.

Our Father! We ask that Thou wilt make this to be a day of gladness and joy to us. We have turned aside as for some new-found Sabbath, to give thanks to Thee not as those that only thank Thee in the sanctuary, but because it is sweet to hear each other's voice, and in fellowship of love to lift up our obligations and expressions of gladness; and now help us, for Thou shinest, and light is from Thee. Grant, then, that we may we illumined to discern from Thy word—that we may discern in all things the presence of God; and may we be helped to speak, to pray, and to praise. And may this whole day be an offering of gladness, joyful, indeed, to us and acceptable to Thee, which we ask for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee that Thou hast made Thyself known to us that we may perceive Thee. We are glad towards each other and thankful; and yet such is the multitude of mercies and such at times our gladness, that when we have thanked those around about us, the argument is but begun, and there is nowhere that our souls can turn themselves and be satisfied with thanksgiving but towards Thee; and then Thou art no longer a God afar off, to be evoked with tears and strong crying. Thou seemest very near to us, and what time we find our words exhaled in gratitude and in love, we

know that Thou art drawing us as the sun draws the flowers. We speak thus silently to Thee and rejoice in Thee with ineffable joy. We are glad to believe that we make Thee happy, Thou that dwellest in an undisturbed security, and canst sweep by Thy power around about this line, so that no man, if Thou choosest, can rise up and disturb the harmony of Thine own thought; yet Thou art one that bendest from Thine own height—Thou dost come down by all the yearnings of Thy nature; Thou dost both stir us up and teach us also to stir Thee up. Giving and taking Thou hast made to be the law of life, and art Thyself chief participant in it. It is more blessed for Thee to give than to receive, and yet it is blessed even for Thee to receive. And Thou rejoicest over us and Thou art glad for us, and Thou dost make Thyself glad in the contributions of Thy people in praise; in those things that make them like Thee, they bring to Thee again.

And we desire this morning to thank Thee for our being, for all the hope that is in it, any dawn ungrown and scarcely showing by its life yet to what we belong; yet we believe that Thou hast destined us to an immortality of which on earth there are no sufficient significant interpretations. It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we hail that great and glorious, though undistinguished future. There is laid up in it enough, and our whole souls reach out after it; when we are weary and discouraged seeking earthly things, we reach out and feed upon that future. Thou givest us as by an outstretched hand something of the bread of heaven, that we may have strength to reach out the journey's end and rest there. Oh, we thank Thee, that our journey is not a wilderness, though sometimes our feet are in a rocky and precipitous way; but in the main Thou hast caused our lines to fall

to us in pleasant places. We have been sheltered by the sacredness of home; we have known what were all the sacred teachings of love; Thou hast shined upon us even as our father and mother; Thou hast sent Thine angels to teach us through brother and sister; Thou hast revealed Thy most inward nature to us through our own children and our experiences towards them. Our house has been our sanctuary, and God has been our teacher there.

We thank Thee for the mercies of the family; for the discipline, for the things which we have had to suffer, for the things which we have had to enjoy. What are we that we should not suffer? What are we, O blessed Jesus, that we should not take the baptism that Thou dost take, and be crowned, as Thou wert crowned, with thorns, yet hoping to be crowned, as Thou art, with glory? We thank Thee for trials, for care, for trouble, for the yoke, for the burden, and for the fulfilment of Thy word—that Thy yoke is easy and Thy burden light. We thank Thee for all our relationships together in society, especially as a church and congregation. We thank Thee for our fellowship here, for the days of peace, for the Sabbaths that came to us evidently as doves flying from the very heavens, bringing peace and purity to us.

We thank Thee for all our joys, which we pray and yearn for again; and especially, O Lord, we thank Thee that Thou hast permitted so many to taste and see that the Lord is gracious; for our own and for their experiences of Thine immediate presence and the outreaching, teaching, and power of Thy Holy Spirit upon the word, we render Thee thanksgiving.

How many have found each other in Christ Jesus that were unknown before, though always living together!*

* After a revival.

How many now stand on a foundation that neither time nor death can shake! how many have defied death and fear it no more! Oh, we thank Thee, that Thou hast surrounded the things that make other men tremble of such sweet joy and such sacred understanding now in the light of the sanctuary, that we are lifted up by the things that cast down other men, that we come somewhat near that divine and sacred experience of the Apostle and are able, if not to rejoice in our infirmities, yet to see how we may rejoice in Thee.

We thank Thee for all those things which we can so far utter, and for those glances; for those experiences in the communion of God in secret, for all those sudden and short and blessed wide-reaching visions that we have had, for all the revelation and hope. We thank Thee for those things that are forgotten by us and must be nameless before Thee, because Thou readest the intent and not alone the words that we speak.

We thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou hast knit so many of us together in the bands of a holy and nourishing friendship, and that Thou art causing the Tree of Life to have roots in our heart, and we are finding that in love the fruits are enough, the bread of heaven—the very leaves feel disease and are for the healing of the nations.

Now, we beseech Thee, that Thou wilt accept our thanksgivings as citizens of this place, because Thou hast shielded us in so great a measure, because Thou hast given us such prosperity. Thou hast caused the doors of the sanctuary to swing wide open from Sabbath to Sabbath; Thou hast blest us in our schools, and in all the various institutions of beneficence. We thank Thee that there has been to so great an extent a year of abundance, that the poor have not cried. We thank Thee that Thou hast not ravished our borders with the Angel

of Death sent forth in judgment, or by mercy veiled in darkness and judgment. We thank Thee for all the commercial prosperity, for the abundance of the field, and for the abundance of the sea. We thank Thee that Thou hast caused laws to be so wisely observed, that Thou art purifying the spirit of law and the administration of institutions. We thank Thee that in all these conflicts victory must come to the truth in so great measure, and that freed from bitter contention, Thou art causing us more and more to know how to bear witness for the truth in the spirit of love.

We thank Thee, O God, that Thou art causing the way to appear by which we are to be led out of bondage. Teach this great nation how to discharge the duty of the day in which we live—how, everywhere clothed in the spirit of divine justice, in the spirit of meekness and of love to go forth and purify the things most difficult in the name and by the authority and with the spirit of the Divine Master. Remember, we beseech Thee, in the hour of our gladness those who this day are in prisons. In their prison may they feel that they have abundant occasion of thanksgiving; may they see through their walls as through a lens the very city of God; may time not hang upon their heels as shackles; may they feel that days are God's steeds, and that they are being borne as in a chariot homeward. We thank Thee that disturbances are signifying that the heart of the world is more and more manifestly towards the millennium. We thank Thee for all signals and portents, and we believe that Thou art causing time more and more to represent the eternal purity of heaven. O Lord God, make haste. Employ such as Thou wilt, work as Thou wilt; lift up, cast down thunder. Oh, speak in those whispers that Thou hast, by silence or by

sound, by invisible things or by the powers that appear, in all ways at home and abroad, and round and round the world. O God, advance Thy cause; remember Thy family, the family of mankind, bring us all into one blood-beat again; may we feel heart to heart the world around, and in the same electric connection of love may the whole world experience at last the consolation of Thy redemptive power, and stand disenthralled and united before God, a blessed brotherhood, baptized into purity, and then, at last, make those break forth accordant with heaven and responsive to its choral utterances, a voice of joy the world around, giving the praise for its salvation to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Amen.

NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY.

Sabbath Evening.

BEFORE SERMON.

THOU art for evermore God infinite and God over all the earth. Thou hast created all things, and Thou governest what Thou hast created; and though Thou dost in counsels of infinite wisdom permit in the realm of men things which we cannot understand, Thou hast taught us by the mouth of Thy servants, that clouds and darkness are around about Thee, even when justice and judgment are the habitations of Thy throne.

We are not in haste to learn Thy counsels, but desire rather to know our duty. Breathe upon us that spirit of sympathy with Thee, that true and earnest desire to do that which is right, which shall itself interpret our duties to us. Grant, we beseech Thee, that we may have a reverent fear of Thee; Thou art greater than we; Thou art immaculate, of purer eyes than to behold evil with permission or with indifference; Thou art the Judge, knowing all and judging all. And, we beseech Thee, that we may never forget that Thine eye is upon us; Thou knowest our thoughts and our feelings, and Thou art searching the ways of our life. We rejoice that it is

so; we would not flee from Thy presence, but whither could we flee if we would? Neither heaven above, nor the earth beneath, nor the waters, nor the space beneath the earth, nor hell itself, could hide us from Thy presence; Thou art everywhere the All-beholding and the All-judging. Grant that we may not have that fear which is despotic; may we have fear that works together with love, that we may trust Thee while we revere Thee. Grant, we beseech Thee, that we may be quickened in the performance of every duty by the love which we bear to Thee; may we be willing children, grateful for Thy kindness, full of fidelity, and desirous above all things to please Thee.

We thank Thee, our Heavenly Father, that the lines have been cast to us in pleasant places; we have indeed a goodly heritage; we stand upon a shore unshaken, to look out upon the nations of the earth that are rocked and tossed as a ship upon the sea bestormed; we are in peace, while they are in tumult; we are without blood or revolution, while they are in revolutions, walking in garments rolled in blood.* We rejoice in believing that their trials tend towards emancipation and glorious victory. We believe that the footsteps of God are in the earth, that the shakings of the people are the signs of His coming for justice, for the deliverance of the poor and the needy. How long are the hoary prophecies waiting for a fulfilment; Thou art arousing them from the slumber of ages, and that which seers desired—that which by their mouth was put upon record—now Thou art bringing it forth into glorious truth! We rejoice in Thee; and when we compare our privileges with those of nations abroad, we have occasion to humble ourselves;

* Commotions in Europe, Battle of Solferino, 1859.

we have not deserved an estate so much better than they; Thou hast doubtless for our fathers' sake blessed us; we are the inheritors of prayers, of tears, of struggles, of self-denials, that in ages past Thou didst inspire in our heroic fathers; grant that we may be worthy at last of the heritage of their faith. Let us not cast our birthright vilely away; may we stand in our places not simply to luxuriate and gratify ourselves in the riches of our inheritance, but to understand them, to rejoice before God in them, to consecrate them, to perpetuate them, to transmit them to our children, and our children's children, through many generations. Be pleased, Thou God of nations, to speak unto this people. Command justice and righteousness; lay Thine hand upon this people to restrain the wrath of man, and to cause the remainder thereof to praise Thee. Establish churches throughout all our bounds, and put therein a true and testifying Christianity, establishing, ordaining, and multiplying the number of Thy ministers after Thine own heart, who shall not fear man, and who shall fear God; and may they speak not the things that shall win favour, but the things that shall make purity.

We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt unite the hearts of men together in common citizenship; may they be inspired with a common desire for purity, for uprightness, for integrity in civil things. As Thou wilt not permit us to stand drooping and dwarfed, grant that the rains of righteousness falling upon this great land, watering it upon the top and at the root, may cause it to come forward in blessed growth.

May there be progress in civilization; may there be progress in all religious things; may this nation spring forward and develop a nobler justice, a truer humanity, a better wisdom of Christianity, than has ever yet been

seen in our midst; and if there are throes and struggles of birth yet, grant that we may be willing to take the Son of God, born more illustriously into the world, though it costs sighs and groans. By the laying down of Thy life, O Christ, Thou didst lift eternal life upon the world. Grant that we may not shrink at sacrifice and suffering, which are to bring forth yet a part of the glory of the time to come. And, we beseech Thee, that Thou wilt fill us all with a sense of our responsibility to God; may we not feel that we are called in trivial things, but may we feel that Thou art putting upon us the weight of ages; may we confront the face of God; may we stand as men that know they must ere long give an account of their deeds before the judgment-seat of Christ; may we live and perform our whole duty as seeing Him who is invisible.

Grant, we beseech Thee, that the word of instruction which we shall speak this night may be inspired of God's Spirit; may it come to the understanding, and approve itself before the conscience of every one that shall hear it. Prepare us for all the further duties of this day, and for the week upon which we have entered. Grant, we beseech Thee, that nations beholding the spectacle sublime, indeed, that shall transpire, may have occasion to marvel and wonder, and to bless God for the integrity of those institutions that stand in peril, that stand in battle, and that stand after battle, inexpugnable and eternal.

Grant that in this great nation there may be none that shall shrink from duty, none that shall fear to speak and act for truth and for liberty, none that shall retreat in the day of conflict, or stand indifferent, while heaven and earth are commingled. Grant that at last the issue may come which Thou hast, as with a rising

tide, urged steadily from year to year upon us, and from which we may not shrink any longer; grant, we beseech Thee, that in this great day of conflict, when Thou Thyself hast swept the circuit, and commanded Thy servants to do battle before heaven and earth, grant that the cause of righteousness may be lifted up, and inspired with all the heroism of God, and may evil be smitten down and pierced through and destroyed, and God be honoured, and justice re-established, and purity in the place of corruption stand forth, and all nations see the beginning of the salvation of God in the midst of this people. We ask these things, not because we are worthy, but we know Thee, Thy greatness, Thy magnanimity, and we ask them for Thine own name's sake: and to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praise evermore. Amen.

FILIAL MEMORIAL.

Sunday Morning, January 11, 1863.

INVOCATION.

Thou eternal God! We rejoice in Thy infinite power and strength and goodness. Thy wisdom is over all the works of Thine hand, and Thy love is infinite as Thy wisdom. This morning grant the rising of that sun that shall cast light inwardly in the soul. May we draw near to Thee in faith and in supplication. May we also be able to draw near to Thee by thanksgiving and praise and sacred song. May we draw from Thy word lessons of instruction, indeed, day by day. May we, in all the services of instruction or worship, be divinely inspired and guided, that Thy name may be honoured, and our souls profited. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

We rejoice, our Father, that Thou art more to us, and nearer and dearer than any earthly parent can be. Thou hast taught us to love; but we have been poor scholars. We know not how to love wisely. Our life is an experiment in its best parts, and it is altogether a failure in much that belongs to it in its human relations. But Thou art perfect in loving, and Thou dost descend with the glory of Thy nature around about us, and art our Father more fully and more gloriously than it hath entered into the heart of man to conceive. And although

Thou hidest Thyself, and we marvel; and art silent to our cry, and we wonder and despond, yet we believe that Thou art, and that Thou wilt reveal Thyself. Not to the bodily senses, but to the spirit, Thou wilt make Thyself manifest when the time comes, and we are prepared to behold the King in his glory. Grant that we may have patience and faith during our exile from home; and while Thou art preparing us to return with joy and honour and glory, oh, grant that our hearts may evermore tend upwards, and that we may make it the happiness of our life, and the strength of our household that we are journeying together towards the bright and promised land.

Bless us in our endeavours to rear our children for better things than this world can offer them. We thank Thee that there is so much stored here that is good, for which our heart should be grateful to Thee; but forbid that we should be misled to think that this is the only portion that Thou hast given us. May we not be left to suppose that what we have on earth is the only food and drink which Thou hast provided for our thirst and hunger. Grant that we may behold the better land, and realize the more glorious promise which we cannot now understand. And may we aspire to bring our children, and all whom we love, with us through the perils and the mistakes and the sins and the disappointments of life, to that bright and blessed sphere where there shall be disappointments and sins and mistakes and perils no more for ever.

We beseech Thee that Thou wilt especially look upon Thy servants who have this morning stood in the midst of their brethren to signify publicly that they will rear these their children according to the spirit and the truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. O God, be mer-

ciful to them, and strengthen them. Give them wisdom, and patience, and gentleness, and firmness, and fidelity in what they have undertaken. And may these children live, by-and-by, to comfort and sustain them.

And we beseech Thee that Thou wilt remember all who aforetime have here presented their children before God, and solemnly dedicated them to His service. May they never forget the vows of these sacred hours. And may those feel rebuked who tarry behind in the duties that they have assumed, and in the purposes that they have formed. Oh, teach every heart on whom Thou hast bestowed the gift of such little children as these, that it is a call of God to higher purity, to truth, to fidelity, and to Christian manhood. For who of us is fit to rear children for Thee; to be teachers of Thine offspring? Grant, O God, that we may be strengthened to do our will towards our children, not by earthly love, but by the inspirations of a heavenly faith.

And now that the fathers are going, may the sons be prepared to make their places good, and more than good. We thank Thee that Thou art making heaven more and more desirable as we draw nearer to it. Gathering there, with soundless tramp which they only hear, are innumerable hosts, upon whom sin hath no more power, and death hath no more dominion. They are God's, and they are children of joy and hope for evermore. Thou art calling from out of our midst one and another, and some from every household.

Thou, most merciful God and Father, that dost bend over us with Thy bosom of love as the blue heavens bend over the earth with the sweet influence of light by day, and with stars of guidance by night, how can we speak to Thee of all the mercies which Thou hast made manifest to us and to ours? We thank Thee above all things

for the revelation that Thou hast made to us of the love that there is in heaven. The great Heart that suffered yet lives and beats for us. We are wanted in heaven. We are longed for there. Not only do hearts yearn for us on this side, but there are those, of whom Thou art the chiefest, O God of our salvation, who desire us in heaven. And while we wait, we are glad that Thou dost experience some yearning to have us go. Thou art taking many. For each one there is an opening of the gate of heaven, which on this side men call death, but which on that is called life. Lord, teach every one who is called to yield children, or friends, or companions, to do it as a Christian should; looking through the sufferings and trials of this life to the glorious effulgence of the life that is beyond. We wait for it. We long for it. Living or dying, it is that we may reign with Thee in heaven.

We thank Thee that Thou hast granted us the teaching of Thy sacred truth from childhood, and that the name of God has been made venerable to us by being twined about the venerable names of our own parents. We have learned to love Thee by learning to love them, as well as by the counsels with which they instructed us in loving Thee. We thank Thee that Thou hast been pleased to call our father,* who has laboured according to his strength, and whose work on earth is accomplished, to his rest, for which he has so long lingered, wondering why he went not. Bless his memory. And may that work which he began, go on still; handed from one to another. Grant a blessing to rest upon the churches that he ministered to, that he loved, and that loved him. May his teachings to them bear abundant fruit. Thou art gathering to Thyself precious souls from among

* Rev. Lyman Beecher, D.D., aged ninety.

them, and heaven grows rich. But earth is not poor; for when Thou takest one, Thou raisest up another to take his place. And Thy work shall not stop. Thou, O God, art not shaken by storms as we are. Clouds do not overshadow Thee as they do us. Go on, then, and fulfil Thy purposes, bringing forward one generation, and removing another, according to Thine own sovereign will, Thou that art King of kings, and Lord of lords. And at last bring us with exceeding joy, through the infinite mercy and love of Jesus Christ, cleansed and made meet for the heavenly society, to Thyself, that we may walk with the ransomed, and take part in that praise with which we will surround Thy throne, giving to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, praise for evermore. Amen.

RETURN FROM ENGLAND.

Sabbath Morning, Nov. 22, 1863.

INVOCATION.

We draw near, Thou that art never far from us, that in Thy light and influence we may know our sonship, and be able, with all Thine, this morning, to call Thee Father. Rejoice us with Thy light invisible, in which our souls are clothed when we are near to Thee. Help us to read Thy word. Help us to sing Thy praises. Help us to make a confession of our sins, and to aspire with all fond desires towards holiness. Help us this day to give thanks. And in communion and fellowship with Thee, make this Sabbath memorable for the bounty of Thy grace. We ask it in the name of Jesus. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

Our Father, we are this morning drawn to Thee by Thine own nature. Thou art present with us even in the asking, and that which we ask is of Thy presence; for Thou, in the greatness of Thy fatherhood, art breathing that love upon us, and our unknowing hearts are taught of Thee to say, Father. And this morning Thou dost shadow to us, faintly, what are the riches of that love which Thou hast towards us, and which Thou art begetting in us towards Thee. Thou art unfolding Thyself to our thoughts, not in the greatness of Thine outward

power, which the heavens declare and the earth manifests, but in the more wonderful treasure of Thine inward disposition, where Thy glory dwells, and where Thou art promised God, in Thine ineffable, in Thy wondrous power of sacrifice, in Thy tender mercy and loving-kindness.

We desire to be made to feel that all things are ours —Christ, and God, and the realm where They dwell; that we are beloved as the children of the living God; and that no good thing shall we lack upon earth, and none for ever. We have trusted Thee blindly in days gone by; and as little by little Thou hast taught us more intelligently to trust Thee, we have proved Thy promises and Thy nature, and never found Thee wanting. And we, too, may entitle Thee *the God who dost exceeding abundantly, more than we ask or think.*

O God! our burdens have never been heavy enough to crush us. Though they be ever so heavy, when Thine arm is underneath us, all troubles are not able to pierce us unto death. When Thou that didst wear the crown of thorns art near us to sustain us in our grief, all our wrestling with our guilt and its fears, and our abasement and anguish and distress, have not been able to overcome us. Since we are bound to Thee by faith, nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus—neither things present nor things to come, nor all the wealth of trouble that the world has for us, nor all the things which we fear in the great invisible future. Since we have Thee, and consciously have Thee, we are armed on every side, not against suffering, which is our right and baptism by which we take hold of Thee and become Thy disciples, but against its evils in over measure, so that it doth not destroy us. Yea, we can, like Thyself, give our life and still keep it. Having power

to lay it down, Thou hadst power to take it up, and Thou hast said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." And so we are bowed down in a death anguish, and yet lifted up into newness of life every day; and every day, through crucifixion, we grow strong with the power of Christ, and are borne up by it.

So Thou art teaching us the wondrous lore of Thy kingdom within. And its mystic truths are unfolded through our experience, and not through our thought. Things which we may not understand by the book and by the letter, little by little Thou leadest us as by the way, and behold! they are written in our hearts and we understand them. O God, Thou hast laid up themes for gratitude for life eternal in our experience; and we desire this morning to accept all Thy mercies to us through Christ Jesus. With expressions of gratitude, we desire, this morning, to recognize our dependence upon Thee. Our great unworthiness is illustrated by Thy great glory and goodness. We are witnesses, our Father, for Thee to-day; and in the presence of Thy people, and before the great congregation, we desire to join hands and hearts again, invoking Thee as our God. Thy service shall be our life. Our hearts are temples of the living God; and though idols have been set up there, Thou, O God, dost not desire the temple, but the idol only. And in great mercy Thou wilt make all things that are dear to us, dearer by depriving them of their power in undue measure over us. Thou wilt lead us through humiliation to exaltation; Thou wilt lead us downward, that we may stand not far from Thy throne. Thou wilt make us like Thyself. Knowing the baptism and knowing the cup, we still say, "Let us not sit far from Thy right hand and Thy left in Thy glory." We, better instructed than the children that came unto Thee ambitiously, knowing

what it is to follow Christ, desire still to follow. Though it be a crown of thorns, and the road to the cross, we desire to keep Thee company. And be pleased to accept this morning our consecration.

We have hung heavy upon Thee; we have been children that drew backward and wandered incessantly from the right way. Thy patience, had it been other than divine, would long ago have been weary with us; and yet we adore and admire that patience that has not been weary. And we cast ourselves now, unworthy as we are, upon Thine hands and upon Thy heart. Do Thou, dear and loving God, love us, and teach us to understand Thy love, and to return it; and give us augmented affections, by their being purified, till we may, day by day, live more in this divine atmosphere. And while we are in the world, taking part in our necessary duties here, may we still live incessantly in the spirit of Christ, and for the things that are dear to the heart of Christ. May we be able to consecrate our business, our ambitions, our pleasures, our inmost affections, our households, and all that we have, to the service of the Lord our living God.

Our Father, we thank Thee that we are again in Thy presence. The desire of our heart is fulfilled, and we stand again in Thy courts, where we have prayed and longed to be. Thou hast been gracious to us in distant lands and upon the sea; and Thou hast returned us again to those who are dearer to us than life itself—to our own people and to our own home. And we desire, O God, this morning, to recognize Thy goodness, which we cannot speak; and we desire that Thou wouldst be pleased to accept the residue of our life, that Thou wouldst make it more and more efficient in Thy service, that nothing may win us from Christ, that nothing may

win us from His work, or from the sacrifices that He requires; that we may become more and more simple, and truthful, and humble, and consecrated to our duty among men. And we beseech of Thee that Thou wilt accept the gratitude of this congregation, and their affection. And we pray that they, too, this morning, with their first and sweetest exercises of worship, may give themselves anew to God in the highest consecration, and for the service of God in the midst of their fellows. May they not seek selfish advancement. May they be delivered from all pride and vanity of disposition. And we beseech of Thee that this church, now united again—pastor and people—may be more holy, more full of the Spirit of the living God; that out of this church, as from the temple of the Lord, there may go forth more gospel of love, that shall be for the regeneration of the world.

And we beseech Thee that Thou wilt bless all the families of this congregation—all that are in Thy presence this morning. Thou hast dealt sorely with many, but not hardly. Thou hast given them to be united with Christ in suffering, and art holding for them the fulfilment of the promise, that if they suffer with Him here, they shall reign with Him hereafter. Put Thine arm round about those who are still weak with trouble; those that wander, calling their Father and finding Him not; those that cannot subdue the natural feelings that spring up under the chastisements of Thy providence. O God, Thou art the Teacher, Guide, and Comforter. Be with those that must yet walk in the darkness or in the fiery furnace, and sustain them in all Thy dispensations, that their faith may not fail, and that Thy work in them may be perfected in Thine own time. And upon those who are struggling under cares, and burdens, and

griefs, and disappointments, lift, we beseech Thee, the quickening light of morning. We are yet walking in the twilight, but now, when sunrise is at hand, how near to us is the coming of that tranquil kingdom from whose sky is banished cloud and storm and trouble! And let the vision of the near future overcome the present, that we bear our cares and drink our cup, and, with joy and songs in the night, show forth the power of God to sustain His afflicted people.

And, we beseech of Thee, remember not only this church and congregation, but all that are gathered in the Sabbath-school and in classes for instruction in Thy word. Those that teach—may they be taught of God; and those that learn—may they learn the veritable love of Thy Spirit.

We beseech Thee, that all the churches gathered together to-day may be filled with Thy light and presence.

Remember our whole land, Thou that art guiding us in a way that we know not of. We commit ourselves to Thy paternal care. Give wisdom to the State and National governments. May the President of these United States continually be inspired and led by the Spirit of the living God. May those that are his counsellors have the light of purity, and truth, and faith. And grant that our armies may be prospered, and that victory may at last come when we shall have been prepared to use victory in consistence with our own principles. Unite this people more and more. May they come faster and nearer than they themselves think to those great essential truths on which also they can stand in firm prosperity.

Have compassion upon the nations of the earth. Remember the people with whom we have sojourned. Grant, we beseech of Thee, a blessing upon all that are

in authority there; upon all there that love Thee, and call upon Thy name; upon all those there that are in ignorance, struggling in their distress upwards, and seeking a place to stand on as men. And grant that all the nations of the Continent, and all the nations of the world, may begin to march, hearing the sound of Thy trumpet and warning. And, turning their faces towards the bright light of truth, may they begin to come forward, until the whole earth shall be in procession, and God shall be their leader.

Hear us in these our petitions, and answer us for Christ's sake. Amen.

FAST-DAY IN WAR.

April 30, 1863.

INVOCATION.

Be pleased, Almighty God, this morning to smile upon us; for we are drawn hither by Thy spirit, moved, we trust, to repentance and to confession before Thy great and reverend name. Prepare our hearts, then, for the offices of this work. Withdraw our thoughts from things that shall hinder. Lift up our minds to that sphere where Thou dwellest, that we may take the measure of human judgments and of human wants from Thy inspiration. And may the exercises of the sanctuary to-day, and the exercises of our homes, be acceptable in Thy sight. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

Almighty God, give us Thy divine influence, by which we shall reach forth to Thee and find Thee. Let us not to-day take counsel of our weakness, nor of our sins, nor of our passions. Raise us by Thine own inbreathing, that we may think of Thee from our own conscience, from love, and from that in us which is higher and diviner, that we may come to the knowledge of God indeed. And grant that we may be so separated from our own sympathies and self-pityings, that we may for the time stand by Thy side and look back upon our life,

individually and collectively, and measure it, without shrinking, as Thou dost measure it, and pronounce sentence upon it, as Thou, from out of the law of righteousness, shalt judge of it. Deliver us, we beseech Thee, from the delusions of sin, and from that blindness which we bring upon ourselves by self-flattery. Deliver us from a disposition to defend our misconduct. Let us not seek to extenuate or palliate it. Grant that we may behold our delinquency, or our complicity with others that have sinned, and that with simpleness and singleness of heart, and true contrition, we may confess them all before Thee; and may, with full purpose of heart, covenant to forsake our transgressions.

Grant that every one of us may this morning review his own state. Reveal to us by the Holy Spirit what we are. Grant that we may have some estimate of how we stand in the presence of our God. And help every one of us with secret thought and with silent fidelity to measure and estimate and confess his individual sins before Thee. Whatever there has been of selfishness, of guile, of hardness, whatever of pride and vanity, whatever vagrancy of imagination, whatever of neglect of things that were incumbent upon us, whatever of unperformed duties, O Lord, help us to confess it with contrition of heart. They are sovereign delinquencies, for they are against Thee. Our sins are buffetings, and we have smitten Him whose patience bears with us and gives us the very power to sin. We pray that we may feel to-day how hateful it is to take advantage of God's goodness that should lead us to repentance, and build upon it an argument for carelessness and continuance in wrong-doing.

O God, may we be melted by Thy love, and drawn away from the wish to sin. May we have that ingenuous-

ness and frankness of heart which shall, when we detect or even suspect our wrong, fill us with sorrow, and bring us speedily to Thee for confession and for strength against easily-besetting sins; for only Thou canst cleanse us. We have not the power to cleanse ourselves. We can in each case discern the wrong, for we may separate it, and resist special temptation, and know that we are responsible; and yet life flows, not with single drops, but as a flood, and we are caught, and whirled, and whelmed in the multitude of its events. We cannot find out all sinful tendencies nor waive them. Every day we find that we have been inspired by things not suspected; that we have over-measured or underestimated; and continually our judgment is against us, and we know that unless there is given us that sovereign inspiration of God which shall cause us to dwell in that higher atmosphere, and that holier moral disposition which temptation can scarcely shoot so strong as to hit, we cannot maintain ourselves nor please Thee. Grant, then, that we may have the divine help to be lifted above the region where temptations mainly roll and dash, that we may be secure and pure.

Grant, also, that we may look into our households, to see what is wrong there, and that with an inspired hand we may put that right which is wrong. Deliver us, we beseech of Thee, from that wickedness of pride which shall make us unwilling to do that which is right, because we have done that which is wrong. Grant that we may examine the law of our lips and see if we have sinned there. May we examine our hearts, and know if the law of love or unkindness is there. May we see what fidelities we have meted out on every side. May it be our honest and earnest purpose to serve God more faithfully in our households than ever we have done before

And, O God, grant us heart-searchings and strivings of the Spirit in regard to the whole sphere of duties that have lain so lightly upon us in respect to our neighbours and our fellow-men. How have we sought chiefly our own good! How hard have been our affections! We have not been easy to be entreated. We have not counted it better to give than to receive. We have come to be ministered unto, and not to minister. We have refused to be servants of others, that we might thus be chief. We have sought our own glory, and walked in the light of our own interest. We have been of the world—worldly. We confess our transgressions. We see the better way, O Lord God; and how shall we walk in it? The purpose is with us, the law is holy and just and good, and we do approve it after the inward man; but how, in the seductions of the world, in the allurements of the feelings, shall we walk according to the lordliness of Thine example? Grant, O God, that, with a sense of our misconduct and sinfulness, and of the hatefulness of it—grant that, with a sense of the beauty of holiness in this sphere of action and duty, we may have from this time forth grace ministered to us to do better than we have ever done before.

And we beseech Thee that Thou wilt also help us to review the sins that lay upon us as a burden, in view of our connection with this great civil estate into which we are born. We cannot withdraw ourselves from its care and responsibility. It is ordained of God, and our duties as citizens are a part of our duty to Thee. We are called of God to frame laws; we are called of God to appoint officers to execute those laws; we are called of God to determine all the policies of this great nation; and we look upon our life to see whether we have served this nation according to its desert, according to the purpose

that God had in its establishment, and according to all that it was sent to do for this poor sin-smitten world; and we behold how, through our negligence, it hath been tampered with, poisoned, corrupted, and diseased; how, while we have slept, the enemies of God have been wakeful and jubilant; and how iniquity hath stolen the march of goodness.

We mourn over our past delinquency, our guilty silence, our culpable indifference, our selfishness in security, our fear of reputation, that held us back from faithful testimonies in the days of trial. We look at our indifference towards those that have been wronged, and bear our part of the guilt of wickedness and oppression in this land. O Lord, we pray that Thou wilt hold Thy people in the hollow of Thy hand, that they may look at the oppressions of those who have suffered a thousand times more than they. When they rush to war to vindicate their own rights, may they not be deaf to the outcries of the oppressed. And may we remember that if we have not ourselves put the yoke upon them, we have helped to lay that burden on them which they have been yoked to bear and draw. If we have not inflicted the suffering, we have stood consenting, and bearing the clothes of those who were stoning and beating them down. We have known that our brethren suffered, bone of our bone, blood of our blood, children of redemption, heirs of Calvary, God-thought-of, angel-watched, convoyed by sweet and blessed messengers from the throne of the universe, and tending to the same heaven to which we are tending; and we have been indifferent to their great trouble. We have suffered our land to be overrun by injustice; the ways of government to be perverted; and, from interest, from a sense of our own security, and from a most unrighteous indifference to the wrongs of

others, we have allowed this great evil to come upon the nation.

And now, O God, Thou hast come down to hear the cries of those that have pleaded long, but whom we would not hear. And we are suffering beneath Thy blows. We cannot help it; and we rejoice that Thou art a God that will hear the oppressed, though we are their oppressors. Thou, O God, wilt vindicate the poor and needy. If they are dumb, they need not speak to be heard; if they are utterly helpless, the right hand of Omnipotence is theirs. And all the reasonings of men, and all their glozings of deceit, and all pretentious excuses are in Thy sight as the dust of the summer's threshing-floor; and when Thou shalt breathe Thy winds upon them, they shall be swept away utterly and for ever.

We adore Thy throne of judgment, that stands unmoved in the midst of war and confusion; and we humble ourselves before Thee to-day, not attempting to discriminate between our sins and others, but asking Thee to accept the confession that we make for our unmeasured transgressions. We discern and feel that as members of this great nation we have most grievously sinned against light and knowledge, against the truth of Thy word, against every principle of our own laws and institutions, against our own education, against the generous sentiments of every unperverted human bosom. We have sinned against examples. We knew that we were doing wrong; and our briberies have been the goods that perished in this world. And we have been brought into this exigency because we have taken a mess of pottage for our birthright of liberty.

May we not add other sins to the past ones. Let us not seek anew to deceive Thee as we have deceived our-

selves, and sought to deceive Thee in times past. Let there be a thorough work wrought in this people. We thank Thee for any signs and tokens of remembrance, and we pray that Thou wilt restore us to the love of simple justice, and that the rights of men as children of God may become precious in the sight of this great nation. And prepare it for that mission for which we trust it is now passing through the fire.

Be pleased to remember all that are in authority. Be with the President of these United States. We thank Thee that Thou hast given him so much of wisdom, and that Thou hast been pleased to guide him so safely and so prudently thus far. Yet uphold him. Augment his wisdom with gathered experience. Make him more and more simple and single for justice and righteousness. May all those that are his counsellors be themselves counselled of God. And may this nation, by its government, be led in a way that it knows not of. May the generals that command our armies be more and more men that shall love the principles of that government for which they contend. Grant unto them victory. Grant unto our armies the power to cope with those that are in battle array against liberty and its constituted government. Overthrow rebellion. Change the minds of those that are now involved in its mischiefs. Restore them again, we beseech of Thee, to the love of union as the instrument of liberty. And we pray that Thou wilt not give us peace, until Thou shalt have prepared this nation to be the champion of human rights and liberties. Still stir us up; and, if need be, chastise us again and again, until by our suffering we shall come into sympathy with those that suffer. Then may our righteousness be as the morning light. Then let the choral testimony of the multitudes of this land be heard

rolling as the anthem of salvation all around the world. Then may they that sit in darkness, wondering that the sun hath risen in the west, rise up. Then may the nations that are oppressing their common people be overthrown in their dynasties, and the rights of men be established everywhere. Then may there speedily be heard that glorious song, that shall fill all the heavens above, announcing that the cause of the nations in this world has become the cause of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and that he shall reign on the earth. And the praise shall be given to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

MOURNING BECAUSE OF WAR.

Sunday Morning, Jan. 24, 1864.

INVOCATION.

Thou Eternal God, out of the infinite fulness of Thy love, breathe forth the supply of life for us; for in Thee we live, and move, and have our being. With gratitude for the past, and believing that Thou art more pleased to give than we are to receive, we come imploring a continuance of Thy mercies. Give us the illumination of Thy Spirit, that we may read Thy word with understanding hearts, and that we may join in sacred ascriptions of praise by prayer and by singing. Grant unto us the moving power of thought, that we may know what are the things of truth, and that we may ponder them for our good. And may all the services of the sanctuary give evidence of Thy presence and bless us. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

Unto Thee, O God, shall all flesh come. For the whole world hath sighed for Thee. This creation, that hath groaned and travailed in pain, until now, not knowing what it needed, needs Thee. For in Thy bosom only is consolation for all that are afflicted; is strength for all that are weak; is healing for all that are sick; is forgiveness for all that are sinful. Thou, O wonderful God, hidden from our outward sight, sittest in the

centre of creation, reaching forth the arms of love and of succour, to nourish, to nurse, to create, to sustain; to annihilate and utterly sweep away evil. Unapproachable and incomprehensible, Thou hearest the cries of Thy creatures; Thou knowest their wants, and in Thine own invisible and mysterious way thou art eternally active, giving endlessly forth from Thine own self the stores of being and of succour.

We rejoice before Thee; and since Thou hast been pleased to reveal Thyself to us, representing imperfectly, and yet sufficiently, what Thou art, in all the sweet and familiar images of love, and in all the blessed relationships of human life; since Thou hast come into this world, not alone manifesting Thyself in the person of our Saviour, but giving us our language, our institutions, and our customs, whereby to represent Thyself to our dormant and uncomprehending mind; we discern, at last, the beginning of Thy being. O God, we desire to hush every fear and all repining. Thou art supreme, We need not tell Thee anything. Thy wisdom is all-comprehending. The end from the beginning Thou knowest. Every hair of our head is numbered. Not a sparrow shall fall to the ground without our Father's notice.

The coming of winter and the going thereof—the procession of the seasons, and all their variations, are before Thee. Man and his wants, nations and their wants, Thou dost behold. We rejoice that all things are naked and open before Him with whom we have to do. There we have succour where best we are known. There we have consolation where most there is purity, and knowledge, and wisdom, and power. But, O Lord, we cannot but wrestle with the questions of life—why Thou art so long in coming; why nations so long sit in

darkness; why wars and their cruelties march in such gigantic procession over the earth. When, O God, when shall the fires go out? When shall Thy kingdom be established in all the earth? When shall men, forsaking their animal nature, rise up and begin to live in that which is Godlike? We beseech of Thee, Thou King of ages, look forth, and delay not Thy coming, for the earth doth wait for Thee. The cries of the poor—have they not come up into Thine ears? And the oppressions of the strong—has not Thy heart felt them? Thou that art the refuge of the afflicted, oh, how populous must Thou have been, if all that have been in affliction in every age have taken refuge in Thee! Be pleased to advance Thy kingdom, and to make haste, in these latter days, to fulfil the predictions and promises which respect Thy kingdom throughout the world.

We beseech Thee, O God, to help each of us in his place to advance the kingdom of God in his own disposition by patience, by humility, by self-abnegation, by love in a true benevolence. May we lay the foundations of God's kingdom in ourselves, seeking others' good even at the expense of our own, waiting patiently one for another, as Thou hast waited for us.

We beseech Thee that Thou wilt grant that Thy kingdom may come in Thine own Church. Again enter the temple. Again drive out the money-changers, and those that sell oxen and doves therein. Make Thy house everywhere a house of God. May justice, may truth, may love prevail; and may the power of the Gospel that is preached in Thy churches in all this land awaken us to a sense of our guilt because of our delinquency; because we have left Thee without a witness; because so largely Thy people sympathize with the oppression of the poor.

Thou art afflicting this nation, and thousands and

thousands are shaken out of their places. O God, is not the time of suffering enough? Has there not been blood enough? Thou that didst shed Thine own, Thou that didst wrestle and pray for release, and that yet didst take the cup which might not pass, we pray that our cup may pass. Yet Thy will, and not ours, be done. We are cast down; we are smitten to the ground; we cannot look upon those that are blood of our blood and bone of our bone, and know their wretchedness and misery. We cannot think of children suffering; we cannot think of the innocent being driven to the mountains, and through the secluded and wintry way; we cannot think of the groans, we cannot think of the tears, we cannot think of the heart-breaking anguish that has desolated so many, and not believe that the day of Thy wrath is upon us.

Thou art making inquisition for Thy poor. Thou hast come to judge this nation because it has been a slave-holding nation, and Thou art punishing it. Yet is there not mercy with Thee? Shall there be utter wrath? And shall the cup be mingled with the wine of Thine indignation? And shall we drink it to the very dregs, and swoon, and pass away? O God, have mercy. Turn, we beseech Thee, the hearts of those in rebellion from their wickedness. Break down the power of those misguided men that lead rebellion with an armed host. Give wisdom, and skill, and victory to those that are maintaining government, and justice, and now, tardily, liberty. And that this terrible scourge may not go on, wilt Thou give those poor and ignorant men, that seek, by their counsels and compromisings, yet again to wind about us the death-bond of slavery, to know that our sufferings are from this iniquity, and that our hope is in repentance of our injustice, and in God's mercy to us.

Look in compassion upon all that mourn. How great is the company! In almost every household are those who have lost near and dear ones. God, have mercy upon them. And, we beseech Thee, that in all their hours of darkness, in that pilgrimage of sorrow through which they must walk, they may at least have the light of Thy countenance, and Thy consoling presence. For, Lord God, out from Thy justice and Thy government we behold shining with sweet effulgence the name written on Thy breast, in letters that shall never die, THE COMFORTER. O Comforter, behold how many need Thee. Behold Thy desolate ones. Behold the little children. Behold the enslaved and the beaten down. Behold widows in their anguish, and the fatherless. Behold how many are wounded and sick, that suffer night and day, and know no relief. Behold the perplexed counsels and the distress of heart of many that are well-nigh turned to stone.

O God, have compassion upon this nation. Pity it, and forgive it, and restore to it the light of Thy countenance and the joy of Thy salvation. Yet, in the midst of all our trouble, and in the sense which we have of our national suffering, Thou still dost give us grace to say, "Let not Thy hand be lifted till our sins be purged away." Make us a pure nation. Make this a nation that shall fear God and love man. And may the sacredness of manhood rise among this people as it never has risen in any nation on the earth, to show something of the final fruits of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We beseech Thee, O God, that Thou wilt look upon the members of this congregation in their several necessities. Are there any of them that sit in darkness? May their night be one with stars. May it be morning, with the Sun of Righteousness therein. Grant, we

pray Thee, that they may know their way to Thee. And may every one that mourns know that there is an ear that is never closed, and that there is a heart that is never less than full of love for them. And though, groping in the darkness, they find no way, though all seems to them cold and heartless, may God's Spirit show them how to become sons of God, that they may be sure that there is a Father near to them. And we pray Thee that all that are burdened may know that secret way whereby burdens are removed from the shoulders, that all that are troubled may be led into the path of peace. May all that need God find Thee and be found of Thee.

Oh, strengthen every one against temptation. Open the way of escape to all that are in peril. Give light in their secular affairs to all that need the guidance of Thy providence. Raise up friends for those that are friendless. Draw near with comfort to all those that are in suffering or in sickness. Bless all that would fain be in this congregation to-day, but that only by wistful thoughts can be. Wilt Thou be pleased to be with the parents that assemble here from time to time? Bring nearer to them the immortality of their children. And by the love that they bear those children in this world may they be able to guide them, as by the light of Thy face, to that sphere where love shall be immortal, and where troubles shall be no more for ever.

And oh, extend Thine influence to those who teach the young in our midst. Give them wisdom; and may they be enabled to exert more power upon the heart and conscience of such as are under their charge. And grant that our children may grow up from the beginning of life, loving and trusting the God of their salvation. Are there any among us who are imperilled in their youth?

O Thou, that art a covenant-keeping God, the faithful One, remember their parents, and the vows of their parents, and the prayers offered at their dedication, and the frequent supplications offered in their behalf. For these parents' sake, as well as for Thine own sake, succour their imperilled ones. And if there are any that have come hither from Christian families in distant places, who have felt in our midst that they were strangers in a strange land, may they feel to-day that God has called them here for a blessing; may they put their trust in their fathers' God; may they resist the devil that he may flee from them; and may they be girded with strength to do the right to the uttermost, and to shun that which is wrong.

Revive thy work in our hearts; make us more diligent and faithful in every place in life; and guide us through the experiences of this world. And when our course is finished here, take us to our own home, where our apartments wait for us, where our names are written, where we are longed for. And to Thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit evermore. Amen.

EASTER SUNDAY.

Sunday Morning, March 27, 1864.

Thou eternal Father, upon this name we hang all our hopes; and we rejoice that yet Thou shalt make the world understand what is the greatness, and the glory, and the grandeur of fidelity, and how within it is ensphered not only all the royalty of love, but the majesty of justice. Thou wilt yet make us to understand what is the true and full worship of love. We rejoice that Thou art lifting the world step by step, by Thine own power; and though the space which must needs be passed requires ages, we believe that Thou art carrying forward the work, and that the earth is growing towards the heavenly state—towards it, though it is yet afar off. We believe that Thou art making this more and more manifest, and that Thou art employing the instrumentalities of men's devices—that Thou art employing all organizations of every kind. But by them Thou art bringing men back to the original revelation of God in nature; and Thou art, by the lives of Thy holy servants of old, and by the truths that were inspired through their living, and revealed to us through their experience, teaching us what is the hidden meaning of the creation itself. Thy work in the structure of the human soul,

and Thy government that is established beyond and out of sight, are wrought out here. Here Thou art bringing forth the stones for the building; here is the sound of the hammer and the chisel; here is all confusion, and here are all waste and noisome things; but here is but the ground where Thou art shaping. Yonder is where Thou art building; and there they that stand around Thee behold the perfectness of all Thy work which Thou hast had in hand since the beginning of the world.

We rejoice, O God, that we may have faith when we cannot have sight; and that we may have sure confidence in Thee and in Thy kingdom, and believe, even against sight, that it is growing, and taking possession of the earth, and that it will yet so cleanse it and redeem it that the heavens shall descend, and Christ shall reign again, and the heavens and the earth shall be as one. But though that far-off time lures our thought, and charms our vanity, it is for us to labour in this sin-smitten earth, that groans and travails in pain until this day. On every side we hear the groaning; but how little in the world is heard, lifted up in the midst of storm and tumult, the holy joys, the rejoicings of Thine elect, that in every part of the earth do, day by day, sing forth Thy praises! And yet, in the growing storm, the voice of Thy witnesses still gains in power. And year by year, more there are that join it, and more and more there are voices attuned to the divine melody; and yet, one day shall come when the voice of Thy ransomed people shall outbrave the storms of depravity and all the harsh, discordant sounds that are now filling the earth, and there shall break forth yet triumphant the music of the sweet Gospel of Christ, and all the earth shall be filled with it. This world, that hath swung a choir of sadness and of sorrow, groaning and weeping,

shall swing around about the throne of God full of blessed sounds of gladness, and with music fitting the high estate and majesty of Thy kingdom.

O Lord, our God, Thou, Thyself invisible, art doing this invisible work. Thou that dost work art showing the fruit of Thy skill and power, and yet hiding the instruments of Thy work. And we beseech of Thee that Thou wilt grant to every one of us more and more joy of faith in the promised participation of the invisible kingdom and life. Grant that we may follow our Master, nothing doubting. And let us not be dissuaded by reason of the greatness of the way, nor by reason of our weakness. And if we stumble, let that not be a reason why we should still lie where we fall. May we lift ourselves up again and again. Establish our goings. If we waver to the right or to the left, O Thou blessed Saviour, grant that we may be recalled to the straight and the narrow path again. And grant that none, because of the wickedness that is in them, because of the depravity which they feel, because of their shortcomings, may cast away the confidence of hope which hath in it great reward.

O God, may we by faith, by penitence, by a holy and renewed daily consecration, by pleading of Thy promises, and by the sweet tests and experiences of Thy pardoning love, more and more earnestly every day, seek for the welfare of our souls, and for the establishment of Thy kingdom. May we love Thy people. May we be joined to them. May we cast our lot with theirs. May we go with them to bear shame and abuse. May we know nothing so dear to us as the triumph of the cause of God among men. And where justice, and humanity, and truth, and purity, and righteousness are, there may we seek evermore to be, not daunted by the scowl of power,

not seduced by the attractions and flatteries of men, not won nor bribed by any of the promises of riches—promises broken and never fulfilled. Grant that we may take sides with Thee, even in times of weakness, in times of discouragement, in times of shame. May we rejoice to suffer with Christ. May we esteem it more than all the treasures of Egypt. And, Lord Jesus, make us worthy to suffer for Thee, and make us worthy to have our names cast out for righteousness' sake.

And grant, O God, that there may be more and more heroic natures growing up from among our youth; more and more that shall feel that the body is but the instrument, and not the end, of life, and that the world is but the vehicle and the way towards the accomplishment of the true purposes of life; more and more that shall know how to live saintly lives—lives of true heroism. And, we beseech Thee, that Thou wilt inspire this nation and the age in which we live. Lift up all nations higher and higher. Cause the knowledge of Thy word to go from land to land, and the power of Thy truth to be experienced in heart and in conscience. And may all the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and Saviour Christ.

We thank Thee that Thou dost grant unto Thy people days of benediction, and in the sacred suggestions and memorials of this day, that celebrates, in the usage of so many thousands of Thy people, the glorious shining forth of life again from death, grant that we, too, may have, amid all its associations, the blessings of contemplation. And grant that the word of truth on this day may do us good. May we have resurrection. May our hope flame again our love and our zeal. Grant that we may to-day feel that we have left in the grave its garments, its mortality, its sins. May we stand on the thither side with

blessed spiritual resurrection of purpose and hope and love, and begin to-day with renewed seals and covenants the higher and beatific life.

Are there any that mourn the hidings of Thy face? O Thou that rose out of the very sepulchre, bringing light to the world, canst Thou not, out of the heavenly glory, bring light and life? Draw near to any that are ready to perish, whose thoughts chide Thy delay. O Thou Father, find Thy children to-day, and speak peaceable words to them. Comfort any that mourn over sin, and may their mourning do them good. Speak forgiveness to any that scarcely dare to look into Thy face, and may they glance there to behold it, not as the darkness of life, but as the glowing morning, full of hope and promise. And grant, we beseech Thee, that Thy grace may lead all hearts, both in outward trouble and in inward afflictions. Under all exercises and experiences may Thy grace lead all men to praise Thy name, to celebrate Thy goodness to others; that man may be brought, under the testimony of Thy people, into a more blessed attitude of life.

Grant, we pray Thee, our Father, as one and another are passing away, that life may not be less rich. We thank Thee that the dying who die nobly enrich life more than they impoverish it. Then, when they are dead, there spring up a thousand powers; and being dead, they yet speak. We cannot mourn them that depart who do not go out in darkness, but rather rise into light unapproachable. We thank Thee for the witness, for the example, and for the faithful labours of so many as are gone and are going. And we beseech of Thee that there may be found those who shall be worthy to follow them, and to take up the work which they have finished in their labour, and prosecute it to higher and

yet more glorious heights. And we beseech Thee that Thy kingdom, in which dwelleth righteousness, may at last override all war, all suffering, all ignorance, all superstition, and that the glory of the Lord may fill the earth as the waters fill the sea. And the praise shall be given to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

MISSIONARY OCCASION.

Sunday Evening, 1864.

BEFORE SERMON.

Thou hast taught us, our Father, to pray, "Let thy kingdom come, and Thy will be done upon earth as it is in heaven;" and we have gazed as we prayed, and learned to long, with growing desire, for the fulfilment of this inspired prayer. And generations have prayed and slept, and others have taken their places, still desiring and petitioning. And yet, O God, behold the earth is dark and full of habitations of cruelty. Behold how the race are scattered, and how few know even the twilight, and fewer the light of the glory of God as it shines in the face of Christ Jesus. And yet they are our brethren. The most ignorant and the most besotted; the poor heathen that worship idols, which their own hands have made; and those that follow, gazing and wondering, the stars, to worship them; and those that mingle their devotions with utter cruelty; and those that offer their passions as so many services to thee; and all that are in gross darkness, are they not still of our human kind? And are they not children of God? And are they not the subjects of Thy promises, and of

Thy providences? O Lord God, how dost Thou, with infinite compassion and love, such as no man can have, bear to look forth upon those ever-growing generations that make no progress? Thousands of years have come and gone, and they are the same. O Lord, we understand not the mystery of human life. It is dark and trying to our faith. But we believe—help our unbelief; we know that Thy kingdom is as heaven, and it increases silently and secretly, and is advanced beyond what we suspect. We know that the power of Christ's Gospel shall be felt everywhere, and that there is a silent leavening of the whole world. How long shall these preparatory stages be required? And when, O Lord, shall we begin to see the clouds rise, and the darkness sweep away, and the sun set in the latter day? We desire with faith and with patience to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Lord. We desire still steadfastly to teach and to spread the power of the truth as it is in Jesus. And to Thee we commit the mystery of human life.

Grant that every one of us, in our own place, may let our light shine, and may remember that we are the salt of the earth, by which, if at all, it is to be kept in holiness. May it be a matter of conscience and of daily duty how we can cast the most saving truth into the ever-fermenting public mind, and how most we can so bestow our lives that they shall be, as was Christ's, given up for the people.

We pray that Thou wilt look upon our own land. We have utter trust in Thee. If we were to go by sight, we should fail. There is no measurement that we can take that would give us consolation. Our trust is in Thee. Nor are we turned back from confidence in Thee because Thy way is mysterious. It has ever been

so. The mystery of God is only our ignorance. And as events go forth, we behold how wise are the things that are the most threatening, and how strangely our fears were deceived. Grant, we pray Thee, that we may have more and more unfaltering trust in God. May we cling to Thee. May we purify our hearts for closer communion with Thee. May we put aside every weight, and let every sin go that easily besets us, and evermore cling to the simplicity of the truth as it is in Jesus, and become more just, more true, more kind, and more earnest in labour, praying in season and out of season for the fulfilment of the promises of the Gospel.

Grant, we beseech Thee, O God, that war may cease when its purposes are accomplished. We would not be impatient; we see the fiery bolts; we hear the sound of thunders; we know that men are cast down, wounded, and destroyed; we turn our face from the spectacle; but, O Lord, we believe that all things are guided by Thee, and that Thou ministerest them in final mercy. Thou art punishing us. Thou art persuading the people, by the strokes and chastisement of Thine hand, to give up their wickedness. Thou art awakening them to more sensibility of conscience. Art Thou not preparing this people to wear the robe of righteousness? Art Thou not raising the conscience of this nation higher than ever it was before, that thereupon Thou mayest build a truer spirituality? Even so, Lord, go forth. We follow, and implicitly trust. We will not fear, though the waves roar, though the sea is darkened by storms, though the air is clouded. Clouds and darkness are around about Thy throne, but justice and judgment are the habitations thereof.

Grant, we pray Thee, Thy blessing to rest upon us to-night, in all the exercises of the sanctuary, in singing

Thy praise, and in speaking for edification. Make us grateful for the privileges of the Sabbath. It has been rest to many and many a wearied one. Give forth to all the portion yet needed. Fortify every one by spiritual truth for the temptation and danger of the coming week. And grant that we may be educated thus from week to week, until at last our labour is done, our journey is over, our sufferings are finished, and our probation is ended; and then may we stand in Zion, and before God. And we will give the praise of our salvation to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Amen.

DEATH OF LINCOLN.*

BEFORE ADDRESS BY REV. DR. STORS.

Almighty God, Thou art our fathers' God. They trusted in Thee, and were not put to shame. In times of trouble we have proved Thee, and found Thy promises yea and amen. None that put their trust in Thee in a just cause shall fail. For, though "clouds and darkness are round about Thee," justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne. And we rejoice that Thou art now making the dark clouds to part. We see the bright shining of justice between. Yet Thou hast reached Thine hand forth, and plucked from the highest place in this nation, and from the highest place in our admiration and affection, Thy servant, the late President of these United States; and we are as a tree whose branch the storm hath wrenched off. We know our loss; and we believe that Thy providence hath chastisement and condemnation.

Yet Thou hast, in Thy wrath, remembered mercy. Thou didst ordain him to be Thy servant of justice. Thou didst temper his heart to integrity, moderation, and love. In a stormy time, between a divided people with strong passions, turbulent and deadly, Thou didst plant him, and to the end maintain in him temperance,

* At the Academy of Music, Brooklyn, Fast-Day, June 1, 1865.

fortitude, self-denial, patience, meekness, gentleness, justice, and love. And Thou didst accomplish Thy work by him, and didst leave his name an honour and a glory to this people, shining out brighter and brighter every day hitherward, and yet shining out bright as the stars thitherward.

And now, O Lord our God, Thou hast, in Thy providence, by the voice of our chief magistrate, convoked us to-day, that we might repent before God of our sins, confessing them; and that we might improve this day as a day of humiliation and prayer. Vouchsafe, we beseech Thee, to this great nation, a profound sense of their sinfulness. Give life to the national conscience; give honesty to this people. May they sit in judgment on their past, and be sterner in judgment upon themselves than can any other people be upon them.

We confess that we have been a people puffed up by prosperity. We have been made arrogant by our strength. We have been corrupted by the readiness and abundance of our wealth. And those favours that have been meant for our nourishing we have prostituted to luxury, and made to serve as instruments for our degradation unto selfishness. Nay, we have been willing to employ our strength for oppression; we have heeded not the cry of the poor; we have contented ourselves with securing our own exceeding great prosperity, not only in indifference to those that suffered, but in contempt of them.

We confess the sin of the Christian ministry, and of the Church. They have not been faithful to the trust committed to them. They have not stood as perpetual judges and condemners of wrong in the midst of this people. We confess that the Gospel hath had its light hidden. We confess that there has not been that testi-

mony which there should have been. Nor do we seek to excuse ourselves. We confess that the North, which loved liberty, hath hidden its love of liberty, loving better other things. We, too, have taken gain of oppression; and we, too, have sought quiet at the sacrifice of principle; and we confess that in these thunderous strokes and dark days of storm we are receiving punishment. For we have been guilty concerning our brother. The blood that cries from the ground cries in part against us; and blood hath atoned for blood.

Now, O Lord our God, we beseech Thee that Thou wilt grant that this whole people may confess their sins. May we acknowledge that we have been false to the principles of our government, false to the truths of our faith, false to our manhood, to our Christianity, to God and to man; and may we understand that Thou hast been angry with us, though now Thy face is clearing away, and Thou art tempering judgment with mercy. We desire to be penetrated with a sense of our deserving, and desire to confess that our judgments have been fewer than our sins. And we beseech Thee that we may be more anxious to confess our own sins than to charge their sins upon those that have sinned grievously. And we beseech Thee that the time past may be sufficient. May this people, out of the judgments through which they have gone, see this truth of God, sublime as the throne of eternity, that God loves justice. And may we not seek any further to deceive. Thou art not mocked; and whatever a nation sows, that shall it reap. May we not seek to sow inequalities, and injustice, and dominance of strength over weakness. May we sow righteousness, and justice, and liberty, and truth throughout the whole of this land, and may they spring up and bring forth fruit an hundredfold.

Be pleased to bless the President of these United States, and all that in authority are associated with him. Grant that his mind may be illumined from on high. May he see what things are just and right; and what things are merciful. And wilt Thou give him such counsel that he shall ordain judgment and mercy—both of them in the fear of God, both of them in accordance with Thy Spirit?

And we beseech of Thee that Thou wilt grant Thy blessing to rest on the army and navy of these United States. We thank Thee for the fidelity of our men. We thank Thee that so many live, though so many have afflicted our hearts in death. Be pleased to bless those that are wounded and maimed, those that are sick, those that are among strangers. Grant, we beseech Thee, that all their afflictions may be blessed to them spiritually and temporally.

Remember, we beseech Thee, all those that lately have been enslaved, but that now are free. We thank Thee for their good conduct. Thou hast had thoughts of mercy towards them. Wilt Thou still, in Thy providence, ordain industry, and honesty, and frugality among them? And grant that they may prove their worthiness to be citizens, and be established immutably on the ground of citizenship.

Be pleased, we beseech Thee, to bless our enemies. May those that of late have been in arms against us come up in remembrance before Thee. How great are their sufferings! How great have been the desolations of war in their midst! Lord, may their mischiefs be repaired. Grant that their prosperity may be rebuilded once more. And may brethren begin to call each other by names of love, and not by inimical names. And grant that the hands already beginning to reach across

the wastes of war may be clasped not only in compact of friendship, but in the fealty of justice and liberty. And grant that the whole citizenship of this great nation, now reunited, may never be severed again. May this great people be one, with no mischief in their bosom, with no cause of fermentation, with no taint or tendency to decay. May all love each other, because all love God supremely. May the weak be strengthened by the strong, and the ignorant be illumined by the wise.

And may all mankind come up in remembrance before Thee. And to-day may we feel the bond that connects us with our fellows in all the earth. And may this nation, strengthened, repaired, made great, be great —not for rapine and selfishness, but for justice; and may the influence which it exerts among the nations of the earth be for liberty and truth and purity. And may all men learn to love this people, because God is in their midst, and they are clothed with the beauty of holiness.

And now, grant Thy blessing to rest upon Thy servant, who has been called by his fellow-citizens to speak in their behalf this day. Clothe him with power. Make his words mighty. Grant that a blessing may go forth with them, and that they may shake down, as dew from perfumed shrubs, joy and profit upon us.

And grant that through life we may have Thee for our God; and, dying, we may find Thee near. And when no longer we can see Thee, may we reach out our hands and find Thee leading us through death to immortality and glory. For Christ Jesus' sake. Amen.

RESTORATION OF PEACE.

Sunday Morning, October 22, 1865.

BEFORE SERMON.

SINCE Thou hast been pleased, Almighty God, to proclaim Thyself our Father, and to call us Thy children, we would lay aside fear; we would lay aside those mysterious dreads of guilt which lie in our path as mists to chill and to hinder, and would come to Thee in full hope. And we come not so much to make mention of our ill-deserts as of Thy goodness. If we should speak our own sense of guilt, and if we should hold argument of our wickedness and unworthiness, how sad would be the offering that we brought! But dost Thou not know? Art Thou not the Physician of the soul? Are we sick of heart, not before Thee who knowest us more perfectly than we know ourselves? And why should we again and again recite in Thy presence our manifold transgressions? We will rather make mention of Thy name. Thou art glorious above all that are on earth and in heaven. There art Thou whom we love and praise. Thou dost not stand as an idol to be loved, or to receive praise; but Thy wonderful action, the outflow of Thine endless thought, the currents of love and sympathy

which go forth from Thine heart, the stretching out of Thine hand in execution, the endless works of beneficence which Thou dost perform, Thine industry, far surpassing the reach of human thought or computation, Thy transcendent grace and majesty—these inspire the hearts of those that are around about Thee with noble sympathy and generous enthusiasm. And they are workers together with Thee. They labour and rejoice, and love, and praise, not from a sense of duty, but because their overflowing hearts must find some way of expression. And Thou dost lead forth Thy laborious bands in eternal activities, which bring neither weariness nor want of remission. For when Thou shalt have cleansed us from the body, and brought us into our pure and spiritual estate, then there shall be no night and no sleep; no hunger and no need of food; no toil and no drudgery. Unwearied we shall go forth in all the rounds of duty and tasks of joy; for ever singing, for ever rejoicing, the partners of those that sing and rejoice for ever.

To this high estate, and to this blessedness, we aspire. And though, as they that travail in the wilderness catch and lose again perpetually the objects by which they guide themselves, we at times see before us that towards which we are pressing forward, and at times lose sight of; yet, by faith we walk, and not by sight. We believe that Thou art conducting on earth a government. We believe that Thou art calling Thine own elect, that they do hear Thy voice, and that they do follow after Thee. And when they cannot behold Thee, when even faith itself is dim, we believe that Thou knowest how to draw them. As Thy disciples could not disband, nor go asunder after Thy death, though, notwithstanding they thought Thee gone for ever, they still by memory, by

love, by a thousand tender associations, were clasped one to another and to Thy sepulchre; so, O Lord Jesus, when Thou art dead to us, when we are drifted so far from Thy heart that we cannot behold it, when we have lost the savour of Thy love, when we have ceased to be quickened by the Holy Spirit, when we have cast away our crown, and the fine gold thereof has become dim, —still Thou knowest how to hold us. And though there be but a thread left, by that thread how many souls have been held back from their wanderings!

Now, Lord, we beseech Thee, look with grace and benignity upon this congregation. How many are there here who have thanks that they should offer to Thee! May their hearts open, and may they exhale gratitude to Heaven. There are those that ought to make mention of wonderful deliverances which Thou hast wrought for them, or for others. We beseech that they may not withhold the tribute which is Thy due. How many are there that this morning are reminded of vows and promises which they have made! And Thou hast heard their voice of outcry, and hast performed by Thy providence that which they desired.

Wilt Thou hear them that draw near to thank Thee for those who have been restored from dangerous sickness? And, we beseech Thee, hear those that in their very heart supplicate Thee for the sick. O Lord, Thou dost know what the mourner's moaning is; and though Thou dost tarry, the sisters shall not plead in vain. Nor are they dead that seem dead. Thou canst by Thy voice and providence call them forth and set them free. We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt do exceeding abundantly more than any ask or think.

We beseech Thee that Thou wilt bless all that are in our midst who desire to know more of Thee; and while

they seek Thee in prayer and meditation, may they go where Thou hast so often been on earth—among the poor and needy. There reveal Thyself to those who seek Thee in works of mercy and charity. Open the hearts of those that are enlightened and educated, towards those that are grovelling in ignorance. And take away from us the remains of the old man; of hardness and pride; of that spirit of hatred which divides man from man. And since life is short—even but a hand's breadth—and we are hastening through it, all of us living together, breathing the same air, lighted by the same sun, spared by the same mercy, redeemed by the same Saviour, and loved by the same God, grant that we may look upon one another as brethren. Though divided in estate, though different in lot, though separated in endless ways, one from another, still may we find in Christ, and in the hope of immortality, a bond of union and sympathy, that shall bind us in one brotherhood, the world over.

We pray that Thou wilt bless our land. Thou hast blessed it. How shall we ever return the thanks due to Thee? When the foundations were removed, and the heaven and the earth conspired to destroy us, Thou in the midst of the waves wert King sitting on the flood. And now Thou hast commanded it to peace, and the winds have gone down, and the black and roaring tides are known no more. Forbid that we should forget the mighty debt that we owe. We humble ourselves before Thee. We wonder at and adore Thy goodness.

And since Thou hast caused peace to come again in all our land; since our arms are laid aside, and our great armies are disbanded, Lord God remember, we pray Thee, all that suffer. Those that are sick, and those that are wounded—may they not be forgotten. May they in peace find that the memory and the gratitude of

those about them are greater than they have been wont to believe.

We pray that Thou wilt bless those that institute and lead on enterprises of instruction and succour. Remember those that were late in slavery, but now have come forth with multiplied labour-pains into the new birth of liberty. And grant, whatever they may suffer, that by suffering patiently borne, under the guidance of Thy providence, they may attain to their perfect and full citizenship.

And grant, we pray Thee, a blessing to rest upon those who lately were our enemies, but who are now our brethren again. More and more teach us to love them as brethren, and to forget their wrongs and infelicities. May we learn to put ourselves in their places, and ask ourselves whether, if we had been tempted as they were, we would have done better than they have done. And may we be more ready to forgive than to demand strict justice. And grant, we pray Thee, O Lord, that there may be a firmer concord, a growing respect, and the interchange of offices of reciprocal love and confidence. And grant that this great nation may be banded together again. Now, its sins cleansed away, its iniquities taken from it, may we begin that glorious progress which shall culminate in a conscience purified by a true Christianity. And may we not be strong for rapine, or for avarice, or for ambition, or for godless rule over the weak. May it be ours to raise men, to preach the Gospel to them, and to send abroad to the ends of the earth that civilization which Christ inspires.

Wilt Thou, O God, remember our rulers? Be with the President of these United States, whom Thou hast called in a troublous time to great and onerous duties. Thou hast led him, and art leading him, as Thou didst

him that went before. And we beseech of Thee that Thou wilt still be his God; and may he be guided by that wisdom which descends from above; and may he seek those things which make for peace and concord. Strengthen his hands and heart. And grant that those who counsel him may be pure men. May the legislatures of the States that assemble, and the National Legislature be imbued with the Spirit of God. May Thy Spirit dwell in the midst of this people. Thou hast done great things for it. Thou hast opened a way for us when we knew not what course to pursue. When all was dark, and it seemed as though midnight had settled for ever upon us, Thou didst send us light. And Thou that hast done such wondrous works in times past shalt not sleep nor forget. Thou wilt yet be our leader in our troubles. And we will overcome them all by faith and holy trust in God, who shall carry us through to the end of our lives, and then receive us home to glory. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

BAPTISMAL SERVICE.

Sabbath Morning, May 14, 1865.

BEFORE SERMON.

Into the bosom of Thy love, O Thou eternal Father, from whom we have learned to love, from whom we have borrowed parentage itself, we bring back our children, and are glad to hear Thee say, "Suffer them to come unto me, and forbid them not." For these are the least things that there are, and the most helpless. And gloriously do we understand the nature of all loving in Thee, when Thou, the highest and the mightiest, dost condescend to think of and to embrace in Thy providence and Thy grace these our offspring. We rejoice that they are not left alone to our ministration, nor to those laws which, in their nascent life, struggle feebly for them. There is above all thought the Father of thought; and there is above all law the Father of law; and to Thy sovereign care we commit our children, rejoicing that now with Thy promises, Thy sympathy, and Thy help, we are stronger, and wiser, and more hopeful. We are able courageously to look upon the world in which they must live, with all its temptations, with all its needful struggles, and the great cloud of its

sorrows, and the storms that beat upon so many; and we commend to Thee our children as they come, step by step, into the experiences which we have had, and they must have, with a confidence firm as Thy word. Thou wilt take care of them, for Thou hast the argument of care in Thine own soul—Thou dost love them.

And be pleased, Almighty God, to bless the parents that have brought hither their children to-day. Let it not be an unmeaning ceremony in which they have engaged. May they understand that they have covenanted with God and with their brethren here, as have these brethren with them, to rear these children in the knowledge and in the spirit of Christ. Grant that they may be able to set apart and understand the true life of Christ in distinction from that of the world; and may they be able not only to inspire these children with knowledge, but from the very morning of their life to train them so that their first dispositions shall be Christian dispositions, and their earlier aspirations shall be towards Christ, and things of truth and purity; and teach them, when older, to come back with their conscience and faith and overcome the realm of wickedness in them, as well as to set themselves victoriously against that which is evil in the world.

And grant, we beseech Thee, that this solemn scene may not die from the memory of these parents, and when these children grow up may they accept this consecration, and ratify it; and may they themselves go forward in that Christian life for which these parents stand sponsors. Grant a blessing to rest upon all the parents that are here, whose hearts are drawn out towards these sweet little ones. Remember those who have their dear ones with them still; and also those who search in sad memories for dear ones that are no longer

with them, because God has taken them. Give them consolation for their departed. Give them more hope and comfort. And if there are any whose hearts are as an open grave to-day, be pleased, O God, that didst show angels to those that saw angels in the grave, to show angels to them. May they not mourn as those that have no hope, but may they be strengthened and comforted in their sorrow, and made wiser, and purer, and holier thereby.

And may all of us that hold our treasures of heart by so frail a tenure, which may give way in a day or an hour, and bankrupt us in home and in heart, so accustom ourselves, day by day, to view things as they are, that we shall be beyond the reach of surprise, though death should come at any time; though husband, or wife, or child, or friend, or brother, or sister, or all of them, should be taken from us. Grant that we may know that heaven is above us, that God waits there for us, that the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; and that neither time nor chance can befall any except by Thy permission. Grant that in the midst of trouble we may be steadfast and immoveable, trusting in God, as other things fade and fail and pass away, with an immutable trust. And so may our hearts be fixed, no more fluctuating, no more changing, as the fickle cloud.

Grant, we beseech Thee, Thy blessing to rest upon all who are gathered together for worship. Accept the vows of those that have come to enter into covenant with God. Accept the thanksgiving of hearts that this morning are laden with gratitude. O Lord, how much have we to be thankful for! How many of us have great joys unutterable! Thou hast caused the storm to pass away. Its bolts are sped, and they that must fall, have fallen. And how many of us receive back again our

children that have been set apart unto death. They were sealed and stamped with covenant consecration, but Thou hast been pleased to find otherwhere a victim, and they are loosed and are coming home again. And to how many households is it more than to the harp is the touch of the harper's hand! And how many hearts there are that shall not know how to speak their thanksgiving and their gratitude! For the sorrow which Thou hast caused, we thank Thee. And now, since the rain is over and gone, and the sun shines again, we thank Thee for the joys that Thou hast sent us. And our prayer is that both joy and sorrow may be sanctified, and that this great people may be made more humble, more pure, more just, and more true, by the dealings with them of God in providence.

We beseech Thee, O Lord our God, that Thou wilt be very near to those that are sick; to those that are in prisons; to those that are maimed; to those that seek or find their homes only as a quiet place to die in. Lift upon them the light of Thy countenance, and give to them all the joy of Thy salvation.

Thou hast been pleased to afflict this people by taking away the head and father thereof.* We thank Thee for his example. We thank Thee for the savour of that name, which shall be a blessing to our children, and to our children's children. We have saved, and put into the calendar of influence another power that shall teach men manliness and purity. We thank Thee for that guidance of Thy spirit and Thy providence which made him to us what he hath been, and what he shall be.

We thank Thee, O God, that Thou art still further

* President Lincoln.

exhibiting Thy ways of mercy. How utterly hast Thou overthrown rebellion! How utterly hast Thou marked the guilt and wickedness thereof! And one and another of those that have borne high part in infamous wrong, Thou hast brought low, and art holding. And, O Lord our God, grant that we may remember that, in enumerating Thine attributes to us, Thou hast declared that vengeance is Thine, and that Thou wilt repay. And grant, we beseech of Thee, that we may seek justice in a frame of mind that shall befit the seeking thereof. And let us not stumble on passion, and call that justice; nor upon hate, and call that justice; nor upon wicked feelings of any kind, and call them justice. May we listen to the voice of God, and with a heart of love and mercy receive the intimations of justice, that then it may be executed purely and truly.

Lord, we beseech Thee that Thou wilt be pleased to grant Thy blessing upon all that part of our land which has been ravaged or despoiled. We cannot ask that suffering shall not do its mission; but we pray that suffering may be remedial, and not destructive. Build up the waste places; turn the hearts of those that are dissevered to each other again. Inspire industry. Grant that, with increasing prosperity and allegiance, fidelity may have a new birth, and that there may spring up a better Christianity and a truer patriotism than was ever known there before. And may this land, reunited, sit at the feet of Jesus, speaking Thy praise, acknowledging Thine authority, and speeding Thine errands in all the earth.

Bring in Jew and Gentile. Bring in those that are lost, and those that are in darkness and have wandered out of the way; and make manifest Thy right hand and Thy power, which yet shall govern all the earth.

Hear us, we beseech Thee, in these our petitions. Answer us, not for our much speaking, but for Thine own name's sake. And to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, shall be praises evermore. Amen.

BAPTISM OF THE WHITE SLAVE.

Sunday Morning, May 10, 1863.

INVOCATION.

Thou eternal God, grant unto us that life which shall stir the sources of life in us. Shine upon us, that we may reflect something of Thy glory. Speak to our thoughts and to our feelings that slumber, that they may know that this is the Lord's morning; and, as Christ arose, may all Christ-like things in us arise with blessed sympathy. May we aspire to the full rejoicing of sonship this day, made Thine by redemptive love. Grant that we may be able to take hold of Thy feet, to look adoringly in Thy face, to speak with Thee as children with a parent, and to hear what Thou sayest to us from out of Thy holy word. And if our hearts are kindled, give us utterance in sacred songs and hymning on earth, that we may join the choral services in heaven. And may every part of our worship enrich us and honour Thee. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

O Lord our God, Thou that beholdest the earth and all its secrets, we wonder and adore at that long-suffering and patience with which Thou hast nourished it, cherishing the good that it might spread abroad its branches and fill the earth. When we behold iniquity in such aspects as bring it within our sympathy and raise against it all the forces of our spiritual nature, we

are full of feelings of impatience that seek to destroy with thunderbolts of wrath. We marvel at that wondrous patience of the divine love that, abhorring evil with infinite grace, more than is possible to us, prolongs the day of grace and overtures of mercy, and by other rejected and long-refused methods seeks salvation for ruined men. Oh teach us to hate evil somewhat as Thou dost. Oh teach us so to love while hating evil, as to follow in the footsteps of our Saviour, and be patient with evil-doers, seeking by all methods to restore them. God of all grace, cleanse our hearts from evil thoughts and from evil feelings; from all those passions which in other men run riot, and which if the banks and dykes of Thy providence and grace were cast down would overflow our souls and destroy our lives. Oh be pleased to teach us humility, and meekness, and gentleness, and love that waits long, that suffers long, and is kind.

We beseech of Thee, O Lord, that Thou wilt grant us so to rear our offspring that they, from the morning of life, shall have the divine art of restraining tempestuous feelings and passions, and that they shall grow up into the sweetness and majesty of divine love.

Bless those dear children whose parents have presented them before this congregation for holy consecration in baptism. Grant that their lives may be precious. Grant that they may grow up to cheer and comfort their parents. And as they educate them, may they consciously be led of God into all truth, and into all Christian feelings.

We pray that Thou wilt grant Thy blessing to rest upon all those that aforetime have been offered up in baptism here. As they, many of them, are growing to years of discretion, may they answer to the covenants and wishes of their parents. Trained by the influence

of Thy good Spirit, may They become wise, and give evidence before men, by a godly walk and conversation, of the truth of Christ in them, the hope of glory.

Be pleased, Almighty God, to remember that dear child* that hath been under such strange circumstances brought hither to-day, redeemed from bondage, plucked as a brand from the burning, and now solemnly consecrated by its adopted mother as a Christian child, restored at last to the human race, and born again into human rights. Oh be pleased to grant that its life may be spared, and that it may be taught how great is that goodness of God which has been displayed towards it. And may it grow up in maturer years to teach and to rescue its own sisters from the degradation and bondage of ignorance, from the ways of passion, and from all things that are evil.

Bless Thine handmaid whom Thou hast privileged to take this child from Egypt, and bring it hither to the land of promise. Grant that her years may be spared, and that she may be prospered in this labour of love; and, as she is watering Thine own branch, let heavenly dews fall on her, that she may reap her reward day by day as she goes to the heavenly land.

And grant that all who have beheld this wondrous scene to-day, may have, by the Holy Ghost, written invisibly in their souls a horror and a hatred of oppression and wrong which thus grind the people of God and His little ones. O Lord Jesus, what art Thou doing? How many parents there are who would fain bring their children to Thee, but who dare not bring them! How many thousands shed tears of sorrow because they are not permitted to worship Thee according to the desire of their hearts! How many prayers go up to Thee at

* A little white girl that had recently been a slave.

night and by stealth! And yet Thy decrees seem immutable, and no mercy appears for them. Art Thou not, O God, coming for the salvation of this whole people? Art Thou not preparing, by the stern blows of battle, to beat down the doors of oppression, and to raze the foundations of it even to the ground? Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

And bless, while Thou dost tarry, Thy servants, and those that are saints before God in oppression—the aged, that have prayed long and fainted not; those who are in the midst of a pure life, and the young, who aspire to goodness according to the twilight of knowledge which they receive. While we are preaching the Gospel to remote nations of the earth, oh that there might be a heart given to us to bear the tidings of salvation and the fulness of its meaning to those that are in bondage and heathenism in our own land.

And we pray that Thou wilt break all bonds throughout the world, and hasten that glorious day of prediction when, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, there shall be only justice, and truth, and liberty, and peace; when every man shall sit under his own vine and under his own fig-tree, and the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord, as the waters fill the sea. We ask these things in the adorable name of Jesus, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. Amen.

YOUTHFUL ACCESSIONS.

Sunday Morning, March 7, 1866.

INVOCATION.

LIFT upon us the light of Thy countenance, O Lord our God; and as Thou art making the sun to shine forth this day to illumine the earth, so, Sun of righteousness, bring day and brightness to us. May we leave the sordid cares, and the troubles, and the fears of the week, its burdens and griefs, behind us; and, emancipated, may we walk into Thy sanctuary this morning as the sons of God in their Father's house. And vouchsafe to us that meeting of the soul with Thee that shall assure us of Thy presence, and of Thy welcome. Bless the reading of Thy word. Bless our endeavours to draw instruction from it. Bless us, we beseech Thee, in singing, in prayer, in meditation, and in all the rejoicing services of the sanctuary, and of the day. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE SERMON.

BLESSED be Thy name, O God, that there is a new and living way opened up for us in Christ Jesus between the spiritual and invisible world and this mortal and visible one. The way is obscure, and our wandering thoughts are bewildered and lost as we seek to find it. So far it seems so different from our accustomed senses, so strange and intangible, that doubts and fears roll over us like billows. But when Thou art presented in Jesus

our Master, when we behold the heart of God radiant with love, and hear Thee call us Thy children, and Thy brethren, and Thy friends, and know that all power that centres in the eternity of the universe is wielded by wisdom for mercy and for love, we feel that we have found a way, and no longer do our poor thoughts stumble over the stony wilderness. Now in Jesus Christ we find our God, and we come boldly to the throne of mercy.

O Lord, we rejoice in this way of approach to Thee; and we thank Thee that Thou dost manifest Thyself to those that seek Thee and find Thee in a way that Thou dost not to the world; by evidence such as we cannot have in worldly things; by our own consciousness; by the up-springing of the feelings of the heart; by that love in us which calls out to the love which is in Thee, and by which we say, "Abba, Father." We bless Thee, that Thou dost shine into the soul, and grant unto Thy people a witness of Thy presence, and fill them with joy unspeakable. We rejoice that Thou dost teach them that Thou art, and that Thou art a rewarder of those that diligently seek Thee. And we thank Thee that there are so many that are seeking Thee; that there are so many that in silent thoughts are seeking Thee; that there are so many that with avowed purpose are seeking the way to Thee; that there are so many that from backslidings and wanderings are returning to Thee; that there are so many that have had a long night and troubled dreams, that are coming to the dawn, and are waking. Thou Star of the morning, shine out for those that watch and wait, to tell them the way from which the light comes. Thou Sun of righteousness, rise with healing in Thy beams; rise to drive away darkness and all its works of wickedness; rise, that the children of light may come forth and bear witness of their God.

Accept, we beseech of Thee, the consecration which Thou hast inclined these Thy servants* to make of themselves to Thee. We thank Thee that they are beginning so early to serve Thee. We thank Thee that it is not the fragments of their life that they bring with them. We thank Thee that they do not come to Christ only to be insured against death. We thank Thee that they have consecrated the dew of their youth to their God, and that they mean to live a life of purity, of love, of truth, of self-denial, and of activity for others. And we pray that the generous and godly purposes which have been inspired in their hearts, and have ripened into convictions and decisions in them, may be nourished by Thy grace, and perpetuated by Thy Spirit, which gave them birth. And may they never be ashamed of Christ or His cause. May they never be weary of well-doing. May they begin at once to do all the duty that is made known to them. And may they have manifested in their hearts the truth of Thy word, that Thy yoke is easy and that Thy burden is light. May they have victories. May they have hope and courage inspired from the very beginning, by victories over easily-besetting sins.

Unite husbands and wives by a purer, a sweeter, and a more heavenly affection. Grant that there may be to all of us this background of immortality. There may we plant ourselves. There may all noble aspirations find their source. There may we live together in the hope of glory in a realm where sorrow, and tears, and separation, and death are known no more.

Grant, we beseech of Thee, Thy blessing to rest upon the labours of all Thy servants; upon the efforts of those that teach in the Sabbath school and in Bible classes.

* Just received into the Church.

And we pray that Thou wilt bless the pupils under their charge. And may there be those that shall gird themselves, and go forth and preach the Gospel to the ungathered, the scattered, the ignorant, the vicious, the criminal. May there be an anointing of the Holy Ghost day by day in them, and may the work be its own reward. May they rejoice that they are counted worthy to do anything for the name of Christ.

We pray that Thou wilt bless all the churches; revive Thy work in them more and more powerfully. And grant that the time for the visitation of Zion may come in all the land. May we hear tidings of the glories of Thy salvation on every side. And as war hath broken out and rolled its lurid clouds of darkness over the land, now let there be poured out streams of the light of Thy kingdom clear across this continent. And we beseech of Thee that the dwellers on the sea, and those in wildernesses, and those scattered through mountains and mines, may hear the tidings of Thy salvation. And everywhere may man begin to love man. Everywhere may man be precious in the eyes of his fellows for Christ's sake. And, we beseech of Thee, overturn and overturn in all the nations of the earth, and bring in that latter day, that glorious time of appointment that surely marches on, when all the earth shall see Thy sa - vation.

And to Thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

IN THE CHURCH.

III.—MISCELLANEOUS.

I.

Our Heavenly Father, we beseech of Thee that we may be made to drink into the Spirit of God, and be labourers together with Thee in all truth, in all fidelity, in all love, in all humanity. May we not, alone in our theory and in our principles, believe in this greatness of man as made by God and as destined by Him to immortality, but grant that we may have this knowledge interpreted to us in our disposition. May we know how to correct the elevation of pride and its heartlessness; may we have the desire to do good to all men as we have an opportunity. Grant that we may be tender-hearted, and that we may have affection that stands ready to flow down. May we know how to pay some tribute of esteem to all men, and may there be a desire in our hearts today that they may be made better and happier by our testimonies towards them. O Lord, how great is the sea, how new is the voyage, how difficult is the navigation! Oh, give us Thine own Spirit, or we shall never exemplify Christ in the details of our life. O Lord God, cleanse us from this infidelity of our every-day life, and bring us into the spirit of Jesus, that love may reign triumphant in us, and that we may glorify our Father in heaven. And when we have done with life,—though it hath been an imperfect one sinning throughout by manifold sins,—O Lord Jesus, let there be found in us the mercy of God cleansing from every sin, and give us,

through the infinite grace and mercy of our Saviour, an entrance into Thine heavenly kingdom: and let it be a heaven where pride shall come to us no more, and selfishness no more, and corruption no more; and then, if we may lift ourselves up in raiment unstained and indeed purified by Thy blood, we will give to Thee the praise of our salvation for ever and ever. Amen.

II.

THOU that hast bowed down Thine head for us, Thou that art a Prince and a Saviour, but wert despised and rejected for our sake, blessed be Thy name that Thou hast not forgotten in all Thy glory our poverty, our trouble, and temptation; Thou art with us yet more than Thou wert in Jerusalem with Thy disciples. No bodily flesh separates between Thee and us; no hindrance; now Thou canst enter in and dwell with us. Be pleased, then, Thou that sendest light and truth, to enter into every heart and fulfil the promise that Thou wouldst come and abide and sup with them, that Thou dost become a friend in all the offices and intimacies of friendship. We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt so search us, to try us, and teach us to see what things are evil, to strive against sin, and to resist it to the uttermost. Teach us to be true before God, and not mock Thee with a lie; teach us to be true before the power of our own consciousness, and not fall into that serious delusion. Grant, we beseech of Thee, that we may be strong in all the things that are right, and manly, and fearless, and open, and that we withdraw ourselves utterly from the secrecies of iniquity; that we may utterly

abhor transgression, and turn from it; but in this struggle, in this whole conflict, in all the way of our imperilled life, through all the valley and the shadow of death, be with us, that we may not trust ourselves alone, but that our strength may be inspired by Thine and our wisdom made sure by the inspiration of Thine, that we may work out our salvation with fear and trembling, because it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. And if we appear in Zion before God, we will give the praise of our salvation to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Amen.

III.

Our Father, wilt Thou bless us in this word of truth? We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt make the power of it to be more and more felt throughout this congregation, throughout the whole land, and throughout the world. May we not be led astray by any device of the human understanding; may we not, by the subtleties of intellect, be left to put our trust and faith in the things that men have. Reveal Thyself to us so that our life shall be love. Reveal Thy Spirit in us so that our life to each other shall be love. May we love our enemies may we quench them by our love; may we love one another; may love abound more and more; may it be the blessed gift of God to every denomination, and oh, may we awaken to see the fulfilment of the long-unanswered prayer, and may Christ see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

IV.

Our Heavenly Father, we beseech of Thee that Thou wilt command Thy blessing to rest upon us, and especially upon the truth which we have contemplated. Most imperfectly do we behold it; we feel borne on this celestial flood. How feeble is our flight, and how endless beyond the utmost reach of thought are the outstretched realms yet of thought when we attempt to compass Thy being; when we attempt to digest Thy nature, and to lay one faculty and one attribute against another and harmonize Thee! Oh, we are as insects that build pyramids. We know not what we do; we hold the balances in our finite hand to weigh the infinite and the eternal. But this we know, that Christ died, and that He died from love to man, to save the world, and that this is the nature of God revealed in Christ. Grant, we beseech Thee, that we may be fired with ardour of love and admiration for such a God; grant that, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we may be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Amen.

V.

Almighty God, wilt Thou bless the word spoken to the edification of Thy people? Quicken our conscience, and lead us again to lay the foundations on which we stand. May we make a solemn review, and know what our soul-treasures are. May it not be enough for us that we are rich in worldly matters. May we desire to

be rich in manhood, that we may take hold upon an eternity of joy in Thy presence. May we search Thy Word to behold and ponder the cautions which Thou dost give us in the active business of life. May we heed the silent monitions of our own inward nature. And may we seek, by sympathy and prayer, day by day, the guidance of Thy Holy Spirit. And wilt Thou direct us in the intricate channel of life which we ourselves cannot pilot? O Thou that art wise without mistake, be pleased to guide us and bring us safely to the haven of eternal rest. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

VI.

GRANT unto us, our Heavenly Father, to live as seeing Him who is invisible. Thus Thine ancient servants went through incredible labour with wonderful patience and endurance, and Thy servants in every age have achieved the mightiest victories, because they saw God where other men saw but void. Give us to behold Thee in the largeness of Thy mercy and goodness. Give our souls the habit of trusting Thee, so that when by-and-by we need to trust, or we should die, we shall find it easy to anchor in the bosom of Thy love. O Lord God, we have no reason to ask these things in ourselves; we cannot pay Thee; we have done nothing why Thou shouldst requite us thus. The reason why we ask is that it is more blessed to give than to receive. This is Thy nature. We ask from Thy generosity; we ask from Thy royalty. O Thou infinitely rich, give us of Thy riches; Thou that art infinitely strong, give us of Thy strength. Our Father, nourish us because Thou lovest Thy child-

ren. And so, we beseech of Thee, give us every day to walk in the consciousness of our filial relation to Thee, unto the very end of this life; and then, when heaven dawns, may we appear in our true life before Thee as Thou art, and be satisfied because we are in Thine image. And to Thy name shall be the praise of our salvation Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

VII.

Wilt Thou follow with Thy blessing the word spoken, our Heavenly Father? May it be a word in time; may, it be a word of excitement, a word of relief. Grant, we beseech Thee, that divine power may rest upon every heart and conscience, by which they shall be set free from fear, and deliver us all from bondage. May we love men, but not fear them; may we have that sovereign fear of God that shall set us free of all other lower fears, and so, bound to Thee, may we be able to go in perfect harmony with Heaven, though surrounded by all the defects of earth and time; and may we have that contentment which they well may have who have the Spirit of God with them, who have the testimony of their own conscience that, with sincerity, diligence, and singleness of purpose, they are seeking to fulfil the law of God. Wilt Thou bless us as we go from this place of worship? Go with us to our homes; deliver us from all thoughts that are inappropriate to the rest and joy of this day; and at last bring us to Thy kingdom in heaven, which we ask for the Redeemer's sake. Amen.

VIII.

Thou Saviour of the world, Thou hast occasion to bear even with our knowledge. Our best things are so imperfect that Thou hast to bear with them. Our very love is frigid, if it be measured by the golden tropic of heaven. The ripest fruit that hangs upon our bough, spirit-ripened on earth, is yet acerb, and unfit for the heavenly garden. Thou hast occasion, O gentle and loving and ever-blessed God, to carry us all as little children are carried. We are ignorant, we are weak, we are stumbling all the time; and yet we arrogate to ourselves such knowledge that we take one another by the throat, and cast out men that differ from us. We are perpetually proving one another and judging one another; and yet, all the time, we are depending upon the infinite forbearance and love of God. Teach us, we beseech of Thee, the whole lore of love—of its forbearance and gentleness, of its kindness and patience, of its charitableness and richness; and make us to be Thy dear children; and work out in us Thine attributes; and finally draw us, by that in us which is like Thee, to the open arms of Jesus, and to the bosom of our heavenly home, where we will praise Thee, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

IX.

Our Father, wilt Thou bless the word spoken to every one? May it go with power not human, but divine. Make us willing workers, patient workers, persevering workers. May we desire to add to every grace the next, or

to each grace in a lower form the next highest form. May we have such a comprehensive view of how much there is to need our peculiar care, and all the successive stages and evolutions of it, that we might leave the follies of those that count themselves perfected and of those that think they have already attained perfection, and that we may apply ourselves with diligence and patience, and that unto the very end that Christ may be formed in us the hope of glory. This is Thy work. We do not desire through indolence to rest upon Thy sovereignty, yet we gratefully recognize it as high above our weakness; high above the frost is Thy sun, high above the sky is Thy summer; high above our impotence is Thy power, and high above our ignorance is Thy bright, far-seeing wisdom and goodness, and our hope is in Thee. Deliver us, we beseech of Thee, O Lord our God, Thou in whom we have trusted, and deliver us unto the end, that finally we may be saved, which we ask for Christ's sake. Amen.

X.

Our Heavenly Father, we beseech of Thee that Thou wilt follow the word spoken, by the Holy Spirit upon the hearts of men, that the truth may fall therein as seed into good ground. Incline them to Thy ways, that they may learn those ways. Make them hungry, and then Thou wilt be bread sweet to their taste; make them thirsty, and then they will seize the water of life. When prostrate by Thine hand, console them, that they may hail the life that brings them forth again. Cast them down wounded, that they may see that Thou art a physician, and that they may accept the healing service.

Oh, teach us, we beseech Thee, above all other things how Christ may be formed in us the hope of glory. Fulfil Thy promises; come to us, O Jesus; come and speak with us, come and abide with us. Go not forth with the twilight; go not forth with the morning; dwell with us; and when at last summoned we come forth out of this tabernacle, oh, leave us not nor forsake us; but may our first consciousness be, when we awake, that we are in Thy likeness; that we are in Thy kingdom; that we are in Thy presence, received and saved with an everlasting salvation; and to Thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit, evermore. Amen.

XI.

Our Heavenly Father, we beseech of Thee that we may be impressed with the grandeur of those truths which are cast out in Thy word as free as the air, and which we breathe as unconsciously as we breathe the air, not knowing what they teach. Oh, grant that we may not be surrounded by Thee, nursed, loved, cared for, and watched, and yet not know Thee. Forbid that we should be surrounded with God, and yet be unconscious and indifferent. Forgive us our past infidelity; forgive us our atheism. Thou hast made the world, and we have emptied it of Thee. Oh, help us to bring God back again. Help us to see that Thou art still walking in the garden, not alone at the close of the day, but all through its hours. May we feel that Thou dost come into the house; that Thou art with us in the breaking of bread, and dost not vanish any more. May we feel that Thou art everywhere; and may those who are so de-

pendent that they must needs lean back their heads, lean them upon Thy bosom, since everything is to us as the bosom of God, for Thou hast made all things. May we understand how divine truth multiplies itself, how it goes forth in all directions and surrounds us. May we be made not afraid, but strong and rejoicing in this all-surrounding presence of our God. May we be helped by His strength, and carried by Him in His eternal march. And when at last we have passed through this scene of ignorance, disappointment, sin, and trial, may we emerge in that clear light of an unbroken day; and there we will praise the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

XII.

Blessed Saviour, wilt Thou grant by the Holy Ghost that the truth may be applied, which has been spoken to-day, to every conscience, and to every understanding, and to every heart. It is Thine own work and Thine own truth, and Thine own souls are these. We beseech of Thee, O Lord Jesus, that we may not think that we desire their salvation more than Thou dost—for all the desires that struggle in us, and seem overbearing at times, are but drops which have fallen from Thy great heart; and we do not plead for them as those that feel more than Thou dost, but we plead for them because Thou hast permitted us to utter our desires in the form of intercessory prayer. We rejoice that we may, and we beseech of Thee that Thou wilt hear our cry, and answer and show mercy and forgiveness, for Thine own name's sake. Amen.

XIII.

Our Father, wilt Thou bless the word which we have spoken. Grant that it may be an incitement to our motives. May we measure the ways of men, the ways of this nation, and our own ways, not by human opinions, but by sympathy with Thy revealed truth. We thank Thee that Thou hast called so many back from the way in which they were wandering, and that Thou art awakening again the dormant sympathies of man for man. We pray that Thou wilt kindle to a glowing flame that which is but a spark now; that Thou wilt give to all Thy churches and to every heart a glowing love until summer, from out of the midst of Thy people, shall bloom again.

Wilt Thou, O God, bless the remaining hours of this day? We walk with Thee; we would walk with Thee when Thou smitest us, and we would walk with Thee when Thou smilest upon us; for, smiling or smiting, it is in love. We take chastisement because we are sons, and Thou art Father. Oh, grant that we may never need to feel Thy hand as Judge. Restrain us with Thy love. Wean us from our sin, and from the love of it, and bring us back to Thine own self. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

XIV.

Our Father, wilt Thou bless the word of truth spoken? let it not leave us barren and profitless; may it do us good in the inward man; consecrate the fountain

of feeling, and educate the thoughts, motives, and feelings. Deliver us, we beseech Thee, from arrogance and all uncharitableness; make us temperate and unfeignedly kind and forbearing to all men, only exacting and unrelenting towards ourselves. Bless those that are in darkness; bless those that are mistaken, and committing through their own sins and mistakes great iniquities. Turn them back from their folly and give them that illumination which Thou hast been pleased to pour down round about us. We beseech Thee that Thou wilt grant to this city, to the great city, and to this nation, the power of the Holy Ghost. Season men's thoughts with divine grace, and overrule their counsels; may wicked men find themselves shorn of influence, and may wise men be called of God to lead forth this people in the ways of righteousness. We ask that Thou wilt exercise the plenitude of that sovereignty which is with Thee in the world. Oh, grant that nations may be reformed, and that they may become civilized and exalted; and that Christ may see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; and to Thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

XV.

Our Heavenly Father, we beseech of Thee that Thou wilt grant Thy blessing upon the word spoken. Grant that we may have cheer from on high. May we not look down into dungeons for daybreak, but away over God's hills. May we look up where the stars are, and there discerning the signs of the morning, may we begin to rejoice. We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt fill us with

patience. Grant unto us open-eyed visions of faith, and give us courage. Help us to say to doubt, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" and may it obey. And grant, we beseech of Thee, that by Thine own royal power this land, suffering and bleeding, may be lifted up. O blessed God, as aforetime Thou didst send angels to minister to Him that was bowed down, so send angels, we beseech of Thee, to put to the lips of this expiring land that heavenly wine which shall fill her again with life, and with power to suffer more, if need be, that through suffering she may conquer. Lord, we leave this country in Thine hand. It is Thine more than ours. Our love for it was lent by Thee. If with our little hearts we still do surge with such desires, oh, what must be the deep desire of the great ocean of Thy nature! Why, then, should we lift ourselves up to implead Thee who art stirring us up with new zeals and new desires? We trust Thee. Our hope is in Thee.

O Thou who wast the God of our fathers, and who art our God, we plead for Thy cause; we plead for the cause of the poor and the fatherless, and the oppressed; we plead for the degraded of the common people; we plead for the ignorant; we plead for our enemies; we plead for our friends; we plead for ourselves. Come, O Lord Jesus, long delaying, pluck that veil from Thy face which hides Thy light; draw that hand forth from Thy bosom that covers the beating of Thine own heart; reach out Thy hand, nail-pierced, and show mercy to this land. Lead us through judgment at last to redemption. And to Thy great name shall be all praise and honour, for ever and for ever. Amen.

XVI.

Who, O God, is sufficient for these things? Why hast Thou sent us to preach, and withheld the power? Why hast Thou sent us to the human soul, that rolls in depth and majesty as the ocean rolls? And what can we do but stand upon the shore and hear its waves beat? Thou that art the pilot, and that in the storm canst command the wind and the waves,—Thou must quell the passions of the human heart; Thou must change the mind, and make it willing in the day of Thy power.

We beseech of Thee that Thou wilt by Thy Spirit follow the word of exhortation that has been given to-night. Thou hast solicited and called how long and how many? And how hast Thou been sent away from the doors of hearts that needed Thee, and to which Thou hadst brought treasures more than man can imagine! We pray for those that have ceased to pray. We pray for those that need prayer more than ever, that have fewer and fewer seasons even of thought, that grow hard with years, that are less and less troubled by sin, and that are more and more irreverent of religion. We pray for the children of Christian parents who sometimes weep at the memory of father and mother, but who never have thought of God. O Lord, are there not those here who have looked at themselves as castaways, and who have reckoned themselves given over, but who are not given over, and who are not castaways, though they count themselves as unworthy of eternal life? Hast Thou not purposes of mercy in Thy sovereign will? Hast Thou not yet reserved arrows in Thy quiver with which to smite the heart that has been long dead?

Wilt Thou not bring forth answers of prayer in a strange and wonderful manner? Are there not those present that have hovered upon the very verge of joys, who have longed and delayed, and resolved and hesitated? Wilt Thou not put Thine own arm around them, and lift them over their indecision, and bear them forward to unspeakable happiness?

Wilt Thou not, O Lord God, revive Thy work in the hearts of Thy people, and in the hearts of this church? Wilt Thou not gather in many of such as shall be saved, and edify them, and build them up into true and holy Christian life, for the honour of Thy name, and for the glory of Thy cause? And to Thee shall be all the praise, now and for ever. Amen.

XVII.

Our Father, we beseech of Thee, add the blessing of Thy spirit to the word spoken, and grant that it may not be in vain that it is spoken. May we all of us take heed. May we search our hearts and our motives. May we look into our desires and aspirations and ambitions. May we examine everything that is active within us, to know whether it is in the way of right and duty and purity, and whether it is tending upwards towards God, or whether it is tending downwards and growing stronger in selfishness and pride and wickedness. Oh, that we may hasten, by repentance and reformation, to escape from the results of sin and from sin itself.

Grant that those in Thy presence who are in much peril—the young, and those who are in the midst of the whirl of giddy life—may be apprised of their danger.

Oh, that the immortal truth of the moral government under which they live might come down upon them. Oh, make them feel what is the blessedness of purity and virtue and faithfulness in the service of God and His cause. Make them to fear the awfulness of temptation and sin. Oh, that there might be reformation among those that are wicked. Oh, that those that have begun to reform might add to their speed and to the earnestness of their endeavour.

O Lord God, revive Thy work in the hearts of men. Prepare Thy servants to labour for Thee and their fellow-men. Wake up all that have the faith of Christ in their souls. May they be shining lights in the world, that others seeing them may be led to Thee. Hear these our petitions, and answer them, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

XVIII.

Our Father, wilt Thou add Thy blessing to the word spoken? Grant that it may do good to us all. May it encourage us to undertake a release from evil. May it encourage us to undertake the assailing of habits long formed. May we not be discouraged because the labour of the way before us is so great, or because of past failures. And grant, O Lord God, that we may look up at the infiniteness of Thy patience. Thou art long-suffering; Thou art wonderful, and full of graciousness; and we pray that we may take heart, not from what we can do, but from that great summer which shines and distils the divine influence upon us perpetually. Grant, O Thou divine Sight and Warmth, Thou Sun of

righteousness, that Thy beams may shine with cheer and nutriment upon all that are here present to-day. May there be many that shall be called by the goodness of God to repentance. May there be many who have been seeking Thee, that shall gird their loins with fresh alacrity. May there be many who are discouraged in the way, and are lagging, that shall be gathered up, and that shall begin to work again with new zeal. Revive Thy work in our hearts, and in all the churches throughout the land. We ask it for the Redeemer's sake. Amen.

XIX.

Be pleased, Almighty God, to draw us by Thine own persuasion, and to help our imperfect arguments with ourselves, that we may be able to come towards Thee—yea, to enter into that tabernacle which Thou hast builded for us—and find rest. Thou hast promised to hide Thy people in Thy pavilion. Thou art our tower, and from the face of our enemies we run in and are safe. Thou art the shadow of a rock in a weary land. We cool ourselves from the untempered sun beneath Thy sweet shade. O Lord Jesus, Thou art our garment, and we put Thee on. Thou art our life, and we desire to enter into Thee that we may find ourselves. Our life is hid with Christ in God.

And now we pray that Thou wilt bless the word of exhortation to each one of us. May it quicken our faith. May it encourage us in the divine life. Take us by the hand, for we are orphans, and we need a guide, and Thou art that One whom our soul elects and desires. And at

last, after the scenes of this turbulent life are over, bring us to that rest which remains for the people of God. And to Thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

XX.

Our Heavenly Father, wilt Thou grant a blessing to rest on the word spoken? We thank Thee for the gift of Christ our Saviour; we thank Thee for the declaration of his love. We do not believe because the word of God has told us: now we believe because it hath been shed abroad in our souls. Thou hast given us the witness of the Apostles and holy men of old; but the witness of Thy Spirit is better, and Thou hast shed it abroad in our hearts. We know Thy nature of love, having experienced it and being changed by it. Nor can we forget what comfort we have had; the hours of prayer, the hours of sweet communion through Thy word with Thee personally—the hours of meditation, of solace, of sickness and of trouble made bright. Thou that shinest into the storms all the glory of the heavens and makest the sun turn darkness into light, Thou canst also change the sources of sadness, sorrow, and sickness, into all glorious things; and Thou dost. We are witnesses for Thee. Thou art doing in our life exceeding abundantly more than we asked or thought. We bless Thy name that this world is but the earnest of that to come, and if this is that which is done afar off, oh, what shall be the revelation and the glory of Thy love when we are near at hand! Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly, and to Thy name shall be the praise for ever. Amen.

XXI.

Our Father, we beseech of Thee that Thou wilt follow with Thy blessing the truth spoken. We thank Thee that Thy word burns as an unquenchable fire; and that when all the stars are hidden from our sight, there shines the light of Thy teaching, which no storm can blow out and no cloud can obscure. We thank Thee that when there is rude winter without, we may enter into the sweet tropics of Thy revelation, and find blessings innumerable therein. Nothing can pluck away from us the sweet fruit of the tree of life in the garden of the Lord. We cling to Thy precious Bible, which hath in it the liberties of the people.

O Lord Jesus Christ, teach us more and more to sympathize with Thine own poor, and to take sides, for Thy sake, and for the sake of love and justice, with all those whom men would use and abuse and spoil and destroy.

Be pleased, Almighty God, to appear for the nations of the earth. Have they not waited long enough? How long must that choral misery continue, that has chanted sadly and sorrowfully through ages? As a dreary sound of storms that disturb the sea, and rock the forests, has been the cry of nations despoiled by war and oppression; and how long wilt Thou listen to this sad melody? When, O crowned Jesus; when, O loving Saviour; when, O patient and just Judge—when wilt Thou come forth from Thy hiding, and change tears to smiles, and groans to joys? When shall that choral song burst forth, sweeping through the air and circling about Thy throne, which shall proclaim the redemption of the world to the Lord God? Awake, we beseech of Thee, from Thy sleep. But Thou art not asleep. What

time Thou risest the storm shall flee to the heavens, and there shall be a calm. Be pleased, then, to keep us from fear, and from the disaster of unfaith. May we, so long as Thou art in the ship, leave Thee, sleeping or waking, to control as Thou wilt the storm, and not give way to impatience or terror. And when we have, with confidence, waited on Thee, give us the unreserved reward of a blessed translation into the heavenly presence. And we will give the praise to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. **Amen.**

IN THE LECTURE ROOM.

I.

Thou that art the highest, we rejoice in Thee. When separated from Thee, the inspirations of our life are lost, and our joy is but as colour in darkness; but when we are joined to Thee, our hearts sing, and all oppositions cease; sorrow itself is luminous, and the plainest things are most beauteous. Joy is unspeakable then, and full of glory. Thy way is wondrous. That which Thou canst do for Thine own, though we know it not all, we know it in some measure, and we adore Thee for Thy grace; we adore and love Thee for all that makes Thee God. Thy power and august dignity we recognize; but oh! Thy heart, Thy love, Thy beneficent wisdom, Thy tenderness are past all comparison. The gradations of Thy mercy will never be known. Thou lovest to be a God of mercy. This is Thy delight. We rejoice, since we need it in infinite stores, that it is poured endlessly abroad, and that all our wants are met. Our necessities are known to Thee before they are known to us, and Thy supplies are waiting for us.

We thank Thee for the past. How many memories of Thee that come to our hours of musing are full of sweetness, as things are that come from a garden of flowers. We rejoice that Thou art making heaven to us as a garden, and that the influences wafted thence are so

full of fragrance, and have in them so much to make us patient here, so much to make us willing to live, so much that inspires humiliation and divine ambition, so much that makes us content to submit to Thy will. Do with us as Thou pleasest. We leave ourselves in Thy hands, and, living or dying, we desire to be the Lord's. Oh that we might understand what is the glory of our calling in Christ Jesus, and what is the riches of the inheritance of the saints in glory! Why should we go, made dingy by care? Why should we be drudging in life? Why should we spend our time, and employ all our nobler powers in the service of things mean beyond comparison? We who are called in heaven, we whose names are written there; we upon whom is passed the baptism of the Spirit; we are the beloved of God, around about whom wait His ministering angels; for whom Providence moves; who are dear to the heart of the Redeemer; whose wants time and eternity are made to serve. Lord God! we beseech of Thee that we may live worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. May we put aside fear; may we throw away sorrow; may we be rid of care; may we cast our burdens on Thee. They are no burdens to Thee; and they cease to be burdens to us when we cast them on Thee. O Lord, think of us; think for us; provide for our daily wants. Give us not only a place where to lay our head, but a place likewise where we can lay our heart,—even upon Thine,—that we may have that peace which passeth all understanding. Why should we starve when there is meat enough in our Father's house; or grieve when there is joy waiting for us; or despond when everlasting hope is lifted up upon us, and it is proclaimed that we are saved by hope? We desire to make more of our salvation by Christ. We desire to have more comfort and more

strength in Thee. May we know how to use Thee more. May we know how to put Thee on as a garment; how to take Thee as a Saviour; how to feed upon Thee as the Bread of Life; and how to behold Thee as the Sun of Righteousness, shining upon all, and filling all with the glory of Thine own excellence.

Grant a blessing to rest upon us to-night. Already it is coming. We thank Thee for these meetings; for the fellowship of saints; for this rest given to us in the intervals of care and trouble; for the privilege of praising Thee, and praying to Thee. We thank Thee for the unnumbered evenings and days that have gone by; for the fellowship of years; for the memories that eternity shall not efface. Bind us together to-night. Give us joy and profit in this our meeting. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

II.

O ASCENDED REDEEMER, Thou art ever in the presence of Thy Father, unforgetting, and for ever loving. After having loved Thine own, Thou didst love them unto the end. To the end of the world and through eternity Thou wilt be the loving Saviour. And now the evidences of Thy affection and faithfulness are in us. We are severally witnesses of Thy goodness, in enlightening us when we were in darkness; in searching us, and causing our sins to rise up in order before us. We are witnesses that Thou didst call us when we were raised with an effectual calling, and that we were made to know that God was gracious. And since we have recognized Thine authority, and called ourselves by Thy

name, Thou hast not forgotten to do us good—no, not for one moment. In our waywardness in our forgetfulness, in our backslidings, in our wicked worldliness, in doubts and fears and retrocessions, Thou hast been full of goodness. Yea, when we have been unfaithful, Thou hast been faithful. Thou abidest, O God, and never changest. Thou dwellest without variableness or shadow of turning. It is man that changes and passes away.

We rejoice, O God, to acknowledge Thee, to call ourselves by Thy name; and we rejoice that we are gathered into Thy visible Church; that we have been made to take the vows and covenants of God upon us; and we desire to be known as Thy disciples, and never to draw back from the consecrations that we have made. We desire to be aided by Thy holiness and love, so that the world may see Christ in us. May we be able so to maintain Thy testimony that Thy word shall be revived in its living form in us, and we may go forth epistles read and known of all men.

Be pleased to bless us as a Church. We beseech Thee grant to every individual member of this great body Thy saving presence. And, as we cannot enumerate all their wants, we commend them to Thee. Be pleased to find out the want of every one, and to relieve it from Thine own infinite grace and fulness. There are many that are discouraged; but Thy strength is as abundant for them now as it was in days that are passed There are many that say, "What shall we eat? what shall we drink? and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" And Thou art saying to them, "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." There are many that sit despondent, there are many that have been bereaved, there are many that are suffering, there

are many who have friends that are sick, there are many who have lost friends from their earthly estate. Be pleased, O Thou comforting One, to comfort them severally, according to their need, and Thine infinite mercy and goodness.

And now Thou art preparing Thy people to come together, with vows and faithful promises, to celebrate Thy dying love. Oh! may they never forget Thy love. May the sun and the stars disappear from the heavens before any heart that has known the love of Christ shall forget it. And may we mourn over those sins that make us unworthy to call ourselves by His name. May we seek more and more to resist the enemies of Christ, and to fortify ourselves that we may be faithful in His cause. And wilt Thou prepare us for the celebration of Thy dying love. May all that come together, come called and baptized by the Spirit of God.

Remember any that are scattered abroad, dispersed, and that would fain come together with us. O Lord, may there still be borne out to them a communion of the Spirit; and if they turn their thoughts towards this Sabbath that is approaching, and yearn for Thy sanctuary, be pleased, O God, to cause that, wherever they are, the ministration of Thy providence and grace may abound to them.

Thou hast withdrawn many from our midst. Thou art giving them the privilege of standing up for the maintenance of right in this great national struggle upon which Thou hast permitted us to enter. Be pleased to strengthen them in the day of battle. May their hearts not fear. When other men fear and melt away, may they feel, as it were, the glory of God standing around about them, and carrying them wherever they go. In sickness, in suffering of wounds, or in the last passion

and anguish, Holy Ghost draw near and abide with them. And we beseech of Thee that Thou wilt make this Church rich, not so much in the number of its members, as in their heroism, in their spiritual loveliness, in their earnest fidelity to duty. And may Christ have many witnesses from out of the midst of this people.

III.

We thank Thee for Thine exceeding bounty and love, O Lord Jesus, our Redeemer. We thank Thee for our souls' own experience. What to us is the heaven around us, and the earth filled with tokens of Thy love and kindness; what are food and raiment; what are all the blessings of the household, compared with the glory which Thou dost bring to the soul in the assurance of Thy love to-day? For the earth fades and passes away. At longest, we are here but a little time. In our Father's house eternity dwells. But when Thou dost disclose Thyself to us, and call us Thine, speaking our sins forgiven, and giving us the promise of Thy life as the assurance of ours, saying, "Because I live ye shall live also," then, O blessed Saviour, with what transport do we hail the gift of immortality, and all its blessedness, with Thee, with Thine, with ours! Cleansed from every sin, redeemed from every weakness, knowing as we are known, we shall for ever and for ever, in Thy presence, in Thine own immediate love and care, hold on our exalted being through endless ages of blessedness. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what Thou hast laid up for those that love Thee, and whom Thou dost love.

Now we beseech Thee that Thou wilt manifest Thyself to all that are here. Break through the settled gloom, if there be those that are in darkness which shrouds their mind. Though they are not worthy of Thee, make Thyself glorious to them. And wilt Thou be full of all those noble benefactions which Thou art wont to bestow upon the undeserving? Are there any in Thy presence that are mourning because of their sins? While Thou callest them to arise and forsake the evil of their way, and turn to Thee by newness of life, O Lord God, grant that there may be a heart given to them to feel Thy call. We beseech Thee that Thou wilt grant that if there be any in Thy presence that yearn for better knowledge and higher disclosures of God, they may be satisfied. Show Thyself to them as Thou dost not to the world. May the Spirit of God be with them. May they feel that they have an indwelling Saviour. May they have that perfect peace which passeth all understanding, which not the dread of their own sin can disturb, which not all the clamour and confusion of the world, nor all the changes that come upon the human race, can mar, and which is promised and given freely, flowing as a river of life.

Are there any in our midst that desire, because of their sickness, to be remembered before Thee? We beseech Thee be near to them in their trial and trouble. Bless them with the disclosures of the truth of God in Christ Jesus, and make their way towards the heavenly home a sure way; and as birds forsake the winter in the north, and fly through the liquid air, singing as they fly, to seek warmer climes, so may they, when they go homeward, sing as they fly all the way thither. And hearing their joy, knowing their witness, may we be encouraged to follow them, and live with trust in Christ, knowing

that He will not forsake us in the hour of weakness and dying. For what soul, O Jesus, ever put its trust in Thee, and was forsaken? Who ever leaned upon Thy bosom, and was cast thence? There is blessing yet for every one that comes seeking with a childlike disposition, and willing to take.

We beseech Thee that if there are any that are without hope and without God, suffering in sickness and gloom of mind, and in a dark and troubled way, Thou wilt be pleased to bring upon their night the morning of hope. May the Sun of Righteousness arise upon them with healing in its beams.

Grant, we pray Thee, a blessing to those that are of us, but not among us, detained by various errands in Thy providence. Some we know are far from us, in circumstances of labour, and danger, and great trial. Give them courage, fortitude, and fidelity. May they to the end endure as good soldiers of Christ, and approved through faith of Christ, by their good works. And grant that there may be a Gospel in the camp. May a fire be kindled in every single regiment of our army by those that know Christ. And hasten the day when all over the world the power of Christ's religion shall be felt, and when nations shall make war no more. And grant that Thy glory may fill the earth, as the waters fill the sea. Even so, Lord, come quickly. And to Thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

IV.

Thou blessed Redeemer, everywhere Thine eye of love and mercy dwells, and wherever Thy looks are there is light and joy. Who can wander from Thy presence? and who that consciously is in Thy presence can be much in sorrow or in sadness? For Thou hast taught us to sanctify affliction. Thou hast taught us its meanings, and all its blessed fruits and remunerations. And though for the present it is not joyous, but grievous, afterwards it worketh the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Be pleased, O Lord Jesus, to bring us into such communion with Thee that all things shall be relatively indifferent. Grant that we may have such a sense of our riches in Christ's love, such a sense of power in the communications of divine grace, such an ascendancy over time and circumstances, such a sense of the shortness of life and the nearness of the eternal life, and such premonitions of its glory, of the fulness of its joy, and of its interchanging and unwasting blessedness, that we shall not be moved from our constancy. Deliver us, we pray Thee, from all looking forward with pain and apprehension. For why should we bear the burden that belongs to the Infinite One? Why should we carry that which Thou wilt carry for us? For cares and troubles do not vex Thee, while they oppress us, and weigh us down to the ground. May we learn how to cast our care upon Him who careth for us; how to trust in the Lord and do good; how to go day by day, fearing no evil; how to be in that perfect liberty which love gives. Children of the Highest, brethren together through Jesus Christ, grant that we may feel that all things are for us; that our Father owns the earth, with

its seasons, with all its possessions; that the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; and that therefore it and all the things that are in it, are ours. Grant that we may feel the largeness of that calling to which we are called; that it may give us joy, and peace, and inspiration, and gratitude, and love.

Be pleased to bless Thy servants that are gathered together to-night. To each one grant the spirit of needed help according to Thine insight and wisdom, and not according to the wisdom of our asking. Grant that if any are in trouble, they may be succoured therein. If any are in darkness, may they find rising a star over the horizon of their night. If any are perplexed, be pleased, O Lord, to guide them out of their doubt into the plain path of duty. Lighten the burdens of those that bend beneath their load. And grant, we pray Thee, that every one may feel and know that the Spirit worketh in him, and may have the earnest of his promised possession. We pray that Thou wilt accept our thanks for these hours of communion, and for all the memories of the past in connection with them. How rich has our life been, beyond all measuring of our own! How full have been Thy mercies! And because they have been so many and so continuous we have lost the reckoning, so that we scarcely know how much Thou hast done for us. We thank Thee for the past. We humbly trust Thee for the future. Be pleased to preserve us, and to fit us more and more for the work of Thine earthly kingdom. And at last, through riches of grace in Christ Jesus, take us all to our heavenly home, and there we will praise the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit. Amen.

V.

GRANT, O God, now that we have entered on another year—a year of the revelation of the right hand of Thy glory, a year that Thou art making wonderful among all the years of time—grant that, for the sake of the truth, and for the sake of holiness, we may lift ourselves up to a higher life. May we be called to act from nobler motives. May we endeavour to take a clearer and truer conception of duty. And may we, for Christ's sake, and for the sake of His cause, consecrate ourselves afresh to Thee. Thou, O God, canst lift us up; and only Thou canst do it. All our courage will be in vain, and all our good resolutions will sleep as sentinels over-wearied at their post, and we shall be surprised and destroyed, if Thou art not vigilant for us, and Thy grace is not exercised in our behalf. We stand importuning, not because Thou needest to be importuned, and art reluctant to bestow mercies upon us. We know not why we do it, except that Thou hast told us to ask for such things as we desire.

We beseech Thee to grant to every one in Thy presence that blessing which cannot be mistaken, that voice which can come only from Him that speaketh to the inmost consciousness. Grant to every one the incoming of Thy Spirit. Grant to every one a holy joy, a heavenly gladness. May every one in Thy presence to-night feel that he has been the guest of God Himself. And grant that all our offerings of song, and prayer, and meditation, and instruction, on this occasion, may be acceptable in Thy sight, and beneficial to us. We ask it through Jesus, the Redeemer. Amen.

VI.

We rejoice, Thou Forerunner, that Thou hast entered into rest for Thyself and for Thy people. The world has no more dominion over Thee, and Thou hast dominion over all the earth. Sorrows are under Thy feet. Thou dost tread them down as the grass. We are encompassed by them: Thou no more for ever. We are driven to and fro by the forces yet in conflict: Thou, supreme Victor, dost sit serene, knowing to the very end of Thine administration that all things are working together right and well. And we need the surety of God. We need to rise up above ourselves. There is no strength of will, no settledness of purpose, no achievement in times past, no sense of knowledge, nor of power, nor of goodness, nor of skill, that can give us quiet. Nor is there anything that we can lean upon on earth that is sufficient. We are too weak to lean upon each other. All is mortal and fallible in this lower sphere; and only when we lift ourselves by faith into Thy presence, and behold Thy face of love and infinite wisdom, only when we feel Thy heart beating through all changes and revolutions with the same love, do we find peace—Thy peace. Not as the world giveth dost Thou give. Not that peace which comes from desires fulfilled, not that peace which comes from petty victories here, dost Thou give. Thou, O God, dost overspread the soul with Thine own divine Spirit. Thou dost brood upon it, and only its divine feelings lift themselves up to Thy call, and enjoy Thee, and we have rest indeed. In Thee we inherit all things. Without Thee we are orphans, poor and naked and miserable.

And now, O Lord Jesus, accept our thanks for our

past experience. How often, when hungry, have we run to Thee and been fed! How often, when disgusted and filled with shame, and remorse, and tempestuous and conflicting feelings, have we turned from the world and from ourselves, and from everything but Thee, and gone to Thee, and found balm and consolation!

And we beseech Thee that Thou wilt look upon any that may be in Thy presence who cannot look up to Thee; who smite upon their breast and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner;" and who are deeply penetrated with a consciousness of their unworthiness before Thee. Oh! Thou canst smile away the sorrow even of remorse. Thou canst bind up those that are wounded in their very conscience. Thou, in the greatness and the wonder of Thy love, canst heal the broken in heart. And we beseech Thee, to-night, that Thou wilt draw near to any such who are in Thy presence, and give them joy for sorrow, and health for sickness of soul. Manifest Thyself a Saviour; and may sin-sick souls find now their Physician, and be healed, and go forth to tell what the Lord hath done for them.

And wilt Thou look upon Thy Church; upon Thy cause in this land; upon Thy people, divided and striving under tempestuous winds that cast up mire and dirt? Is not this the time for the Sovereign to come? All Thy messengers that go forth are but men. Now we need the great Jehovah. Thou, Prince of Salvation, make bare Thine arm in the midst of the people. Speak, that men may obey Thee. Cast down Thine enemies in confusion. May the righteous begin to take heart and courage again. And may all men behold, and cry out, "The Lord hath come to judgment!"

And we beseech Thee that Thou wilt look in compassion upon all the nations of the world. Oh! how long

shall the earth be as a cup filled with wrath, and overflowing? When, O Lord Jesus, shall Thy wondrous power of death give life to this world, and cleanse it and establish it in righteousness? We long for Thy coming; and if we may not see it here, yet grant, through Thine unspeakable grace and love, that each of us, going forth in due time from our labour, may rise to that blessed land where we shall see the salvation of God. And to Thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

VII.

O Lord our God, lift us out of our low thought and carnal understanding, and bring us up into that eternal peace and calm where Thou dost dwell, loving and blessing with everlasting beneficence. All around about Thee is bright with purity, with thoughts of justice, and with acts of mercy. There is no wasting the infinite abundance of God. Thou dost send forth streams of blessings that flow and never cease; and yet the fountain is not diminished. We rejoice in Thy fulness. We rejoice that Thou art the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, loving still and giving still. We rejoice in Thy power and wisdom which follow upon Thy life. And shall we be afraid to ask Thee for mercies? We bring our own wants; we bring the anxieties of our households; we bring our cares and distractions; we bring our sorrows and sadnesses and despondences, and ask that they may be taken away from us. We ask that our burdens may be lightened; that our heart-troubles may be healed. Grant, also, that we may bring our solicitude for Thy

cause, with confidence that Thou dost love to be gracious. Thou wilt remember Zion. Thou wilt build up the waste places. The walls of Jerusalem shall not for ever be thrown down. Thou wilt rebuild them. And the temple which Thou wilt yet build shall be more glorious than was the first.

We beseech Thee, remember our own land. O Lord God, behold it, and have compassion upon it. And if it be needful that Thy work of fire should go on, burn fiercely, flame of the Lord, that the end may soon be consummated. And then, when Thou hast wrought a work of righteousness, give us peace.

We beseech Thee to hear our prayer for those that have offended Thee; for those that, for the sake of oppression, have gone into rebellion. Turn them back. Overthrow their banners in the day of battle. And have compassion upon them. And grant, O God, that all the manifold sufferings which they have endured may be salutary in the end. And grant, we pray Thee, that when we shall be united again, the strength of this great land may be exerted invariably, and for evermore, for justice, for equity, for religion, all over the world. Let Thy kingdom come, and let Thy will be done, throughout the whole earth. We ask it for the Redeemer's sake. Amen.

VIII.

July 1, 1864.

Eternal God, Thou sittest unchangeable in eternal youth, in eternal love. That same law which made us, and made us moral beings, prevails in heaven and upon

the earth. And right is the same, and wrong. Justice and judgment, love and mercy, all divine attributes, and all our duties under them, are stable. And though human-made things change, the qualities of man, and mind, and government do not. Thou sittest supreme arbiter; and, whatever may be the confusion of things, all things are moving around about the stated laws of Thine empire. And we rejoice that in this confusion there is form; that in our helplessness there is help; and that over against our ignorance and apprehension there is perfect wisdom, and no fear nor uncertainty.

And now, O Lord our God, we desire to be caught up out of the fever and turbulence of the times in which we dwell. We desire to find Thee a very present help in time of trouble. Lord, Thou hast promised to make Thyself a refuge. Thou art a mountain and rock in a weary land. We remember in days gone by, when we have gone up out of the city and troubled vale unto the tops of mountains, and found, while it was heated and full of summer burnings below, that there it was more than cool and transparent, that there no sound was heard, and everything dwelt in eternal calm and purity. Be pleased, O Lord, to grant, since Thou art a rock in a weary land, lifted far up above toil and heat and turbulence, that we may be able to find Thee, and to refresh ourselves in Thy presence. Oh! make Thy love sweet again to the souls that have known it once. Oh! make Thy presence joyful to those that have learned to joy in Thee. Oh! grant that we may feel that nothing can help us nor enrich us that leaves Thee out, and that nothing can hurt us nor harm us that includes Thee. More and more may our life be hid in Thine. May we be willing to give up everything of our cherished plans. May we be able to say, as it is evolved day by day, and made known to us, "The will of the Lord be done."

Grant, we pray Thee, a blessing to rest upon Thy dear people that are here. May every one have a portion in due season of the mercy and the grace which he peculiarly needs. Some are in special trouble. Some are in perplexities. Some are in doubts. Some are in sorrows. Some are in heart-sickness from hope deferred. Some are cast down with grief. Some are burdened. Lord, Thou knowest every heart. Draw near to each one and say, as Thou didst of old to Thy disciples, "Peace I will give thee—My peace."

And grant, we pray Thee, a blessing to rest upon all that are to unite themselves with this Church upon the Sabbath that is coming, and upon such as shall to-night accept the sacred profession and vows of baptism.* Lord God, we pray that they may rejoice. May they rejoice that they have an opportunity of professing the power of God upon their souls.

And now we pray, O Lord our God, that every member of this Church—all that have walked in our midst, and with whom we have had sweet counsel—may be kept unto everlasting life. And when we rise at last in the other and better land, may we meet each other there. We that have worked together, and wept together, and rejoiced together, on earth, may we hold on together for ever and for ever. And to Thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

At the close of the meeting several persons were to be baptized by immersion.

IX.

THOU helpful One, before Thee are all the sorrows of mankind. Thou hast borne sorrow and carried it, since the world began. Everlasting Father, not only is the government upon Thy shoulder, but Thou art Counsellor. Thou dost counsel with the afflicted. Thou art the wisdom-giving and the strength-giving God; and Thou hast from age to age succoured Thy people, and art faithful, and wilt be unto the very end. We commend to Thy fatherly care all that are in affliction, all that are cast into darkness of bereavements sore and trying. How are we unprepared against ten thousand warnings! Still we go heedless, with a knowledge that we are open and exposed to every trouble and ailment that afflicts our fellow-mortals. We still never think that we can suffer till the trouble comes: and then we are dismayed and cast down, and all our confidence departs. O Lord God, teach us by Thy friendly hand of affliction that love in Thee is as love in us; but purer, nobler. As we do not willingly afflict, but chastise for the good of our dear children, so whom the Lord loves He chastens. Are any under Thy hand? We cannot ask that Thou wouldst lift Thy hand—for Thou wilt do what is best; but we pray for those that are pressed down, that Thou wilt bear the knowledge of Jesus unto their wounded souls. Bring near to them the sense of Thy quickening presence, and, above all, of Thy sympathy, Thy yearning love, for them. Oh! help them to bear what must be borne, and remove what may be removed.

We pray, O Lord, that Thou wilt comfort with a bright vision of the coming glory those that are called to separate from earthly friends. It is but a few days.

Like the weaver's shuttle, like the swift arrow, like the eagle's flight, is the passage of men through this world; and all our troubles will soon be over. A few days more of patience, a few days more of endurance, and we shall have endured unto the end, and inherited the promises to patience and fidelity. Grant, we pray Thee, to every one of us, and to all especially that are tried and oppressed and burdened, the reality of drawing near to Thee, of the shortness of the time that remains, of the nearness of the unsetting sun, and of that fadeless day that is before us. We are walking already on the evening time of life. We are drawing near to the morning time of immortality. Oh, that we may rise, and awake, knowing that the day is at hand. And may we rejoice in its tokens, and be prepared to hail it, invoking and receiving its sunrise—the Sun of righteousness that shall never set.

And now, O Lord, dismiss us with Thy blessing from this place, and grant that all the services of the evening may be sanctified by Thy Holy Spirit, and be made nutritive to our spiritual nature; which we ask in the Redeemer's name. And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit shall be praises evermore. Amen.

X.

THOU, O Jesus, didst forsake Thine heavenly company, and of mere love didst bow down to the earth, and take the form of man, and bear all his sorrows and troubles. Thou didst bear the weary lot of life, made in Thy case most burdensome. Thou didst bear the pangs of Gethsemane and the anguish of the cross, and lay down Thy

life. Greater love hath no man than that he lay down his life for his friends; but Thou didst lay Thine down for Thine enemies. And Thou hast set up before us this living example. All the power of Thy nature went forth for others. And though Thou wast made happy in Thine own conduct, it was not for Thyself that Thou didst live, but for us. And now Thou hast left Thy commandment that we are to walk in Thy steps. We are to live, not to ourselves, but to Thee, and for the sake of Thy disciples, and for the sake of others about us.

Behold, O God, our grovelling conceptions: the dead and dull down-pulling of selfishness. Behold how we run each one for his own good, and by sympathy and imitation go in companies, and strive to build each himself or his own. See how little we have sociality in disinterestedness, how little we have company one with another for others, and how yet we are of the earth, earthy. Lord, if Thou dost love us, inspire us by Thine own Spirit, with Thine own example. May there be the desire burning in us day by day to live for the welfare of Thy kingdom, for the glory of our God, and for the benefit of our fellow-men. Thou hast given us some experiences. Thou hast taught us to live, not for our own good, but for the welfare of the country, for the welfare of Thy Church, for the welfare of our kind; but how to carry it out hour by hour, in all things, and towards all men, in honour preferring one another, in pleasure preferring one another, in all things preferring one another, this we have not learned; this we have scarcely studied.

Grant, O God, that there may be the help from on high, without which we labour in vain. Pour in upon our minds some sacred conception of Christian life. Give us help in executing it. And may we have the

witness, at last, of our conscience, that by the grace of God we have obtained, step by step, better things, and are living nearer both to the spirit and the example of our Master.

Now we pray that Thou wilt give us Thy blessing as we go hence. O Lord Jesus, there is a blessing that makes rich, and that sings in the heart. There is a blessing that is as a well of water springing up. We need not to draw it. It comes up of itself, and overflows, and comes down as streams down the mountain. Grant us that blessing. O Thou Spirit that dost promise, fulfil, that men may behold that Thy people are made happy by Thee, and that Thou art with them, and dost abide in them. Thus honour Thyself, and draw men to Thee. We ask it for the Redeemer's sake. Amen.

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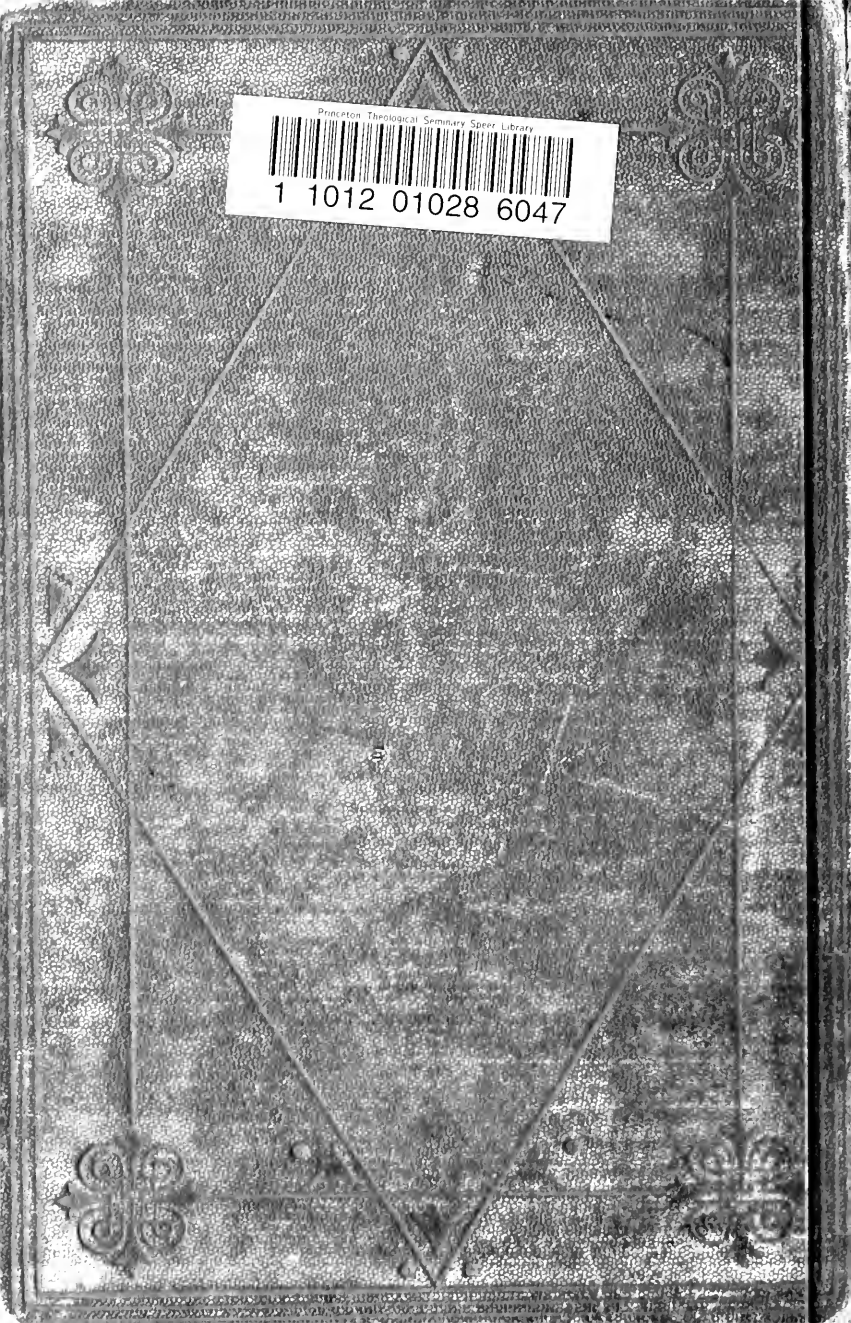
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